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FIRST THINGS

January 1991
Number Nine

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

JANUARY 1991 • NUMBER NINE

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Debating Darwin

You have given in FIRST THINGS almost twelve pages to Phillip E. Johnson ("Evolution as Dogma: The Establishment of Naturalism," October 1990 and "A Reply to My Critics," November 1990) and less than four pages to his critics ("Responses to Phillip Johnson," October). This is not a level playing field.

Johnson's rebuttal shows that he is impenetrable. He says that "the molecular comparisons tell us nothing about how one kind of creature (e.g., a rodent) can change into another (e.g., a whale)." William Provine and I laboriously explained to Johnson that living organisms descend from a common ancestor, not from each other. This is central to evolution and is buttressed by the molecular comparisons. . . .

Evolution is one of the greatest intellectual adventures in history, and it is proceeding apace, illuminated by the human genome project. I am afraid that you are leading your readers into a cultural morass by giving them a second dose of the vaporings of a lawyer who is trying to make a name for himself by holding forth on a subject he doesn't understand. . . . Johnson complains that "Darwinists" try to prevent "critics" from getting a fair hearing, because Provine and I say that his essay should not have been published. But critics should do their homework before they are given a hearing; otherwise, the literature becomes cluttered with nonsense. We have to spend much time fighting the creationist challenge to science, including geology and astronomy as well as evolution.

Matthew Berke's response begins by alluding to Johnson's allegation about a "trade secret of paleontology." Evidently he either did not read or did not believe me when I pointed out that there are no such secrets in science.

Thomas H. Jukes
Berkeley, CA

Matthew Berke, in his response to Phillip E. Johnson's essay on evolution, trots out an old war horse of Christian apologetics. He argues that, whatever may be the case about the formation of human physiognomy, the human capacity for objective knowledge could not have been formed "without a creative act by some transcendent agency, the God of the Bible being the prime suspect." The inconceivability of any other, naturalistic explanation for this intellectual capacity puts the natural sciences, including evolutionary biology, in their place once and for all. A Darwinian account of the human intellectual capacity, for example, cannot even be formulated without denying the very thing that places any such account in the realm of objective knowledge claims, the ability to transcend the processes of nature. "To deny, in the name of science, the freedom that transcends nature [says Berke] is thus to destroy the implicit foundation of scientific as well as religious truth. . . ."

This argument works only if you happen to think that the natural sciences are in the business of approximating a God's-eye view of things. Then, of course, a theory about human beings that has no place in it for that God-like capacity has no standing as a piece of natural science.

But, if you happen to think that the natural sciences are in the business of enhancing our security in the world by improving our ability to predict and control things, then the matter is quite different. In this case, the fact that a theory about human beings has no place in it for a God-like transcendence of nature is neither here nor there so far as its standing as a piece of science is concerned.

Such a theory might, for example, explain the natural sciences as special cases of the human ability to manipulate sounds and marks and, by so doing, come up with vocabularies that facilitate prediction and control. The explanation of this linguistic ability, in turn, is no more mysterious in its own way than that of the ability

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of birds to manipulate twigs. Both are treated as behavioral characteristics the formation of which is explicable in Darwinian terms.

Such a Darwinian naturalistic account of our intellectual capabilities is neither self-refuting nor does it fly in the face of any obvious or self-evident facts about ourselves. It does conflict with loaded self-descriptions, like those of Berke, that make our intellectual capabilities out to be supernatural in character by definition. But, unless you take the truth of biblical Christianity to be a matter of intuitive certainty, this latter conflict is by no means as decisive as Berke makes it out to be.

Berke's argument is one old war horse that should be put out to pasture, the sooner the better.

J. Wesley Robbins
Indiana University at South Bend

Professor Phillip E. Johnson will undoubtedly defend himself against William B. Provine and Thomas Jukes. However, we readers who subscribe to your publication in order to be enlightened on matters of religion and public life must come to your defense against the charges of editorial dereliction.

When Provine says that only "an uncritical or uninformed editorial process" permitted the article to be published, and when Jukes states that nothing in the article "makes it worth publishing," they exhibit precisely the kind of "scientific" arrogance that Johnson finds fault with in his informative article.

Richard M. Harnett
San Francisco, CA

As I read Phillip E. Johnson's article, I at first wondered why FIRST THINGS was devoting space to the old "Monkey Trial" debate. Then I read the responses and was struck by the intense rage of his critics. William Provine and Thomas Jukes apparently want to *silence* Johnson and they are willing to attack the intelligence and judgment of publishers and editors in order to do it. Provine says, "Only an uncritical or uninformed editorial process could allow this sham to be published." Jukes adds, "There is nothing in this article that makes it worth publishing." This is harsh stuff!

Since I find nothing either obscene or treasonous in Phillip Johnson's article, I can only conclude that he must be saying something *important* (maybe even something close to the truth) in order to evoke such hostile rebuttals. I do know the problem does not lie with the editors of FIRST THINGS. . . . Thank you for bringing your readers up to date on the current state of the evolution/creationism struggle. I will now pay more attention to what I previously thought was an outdated issue.

Phillip H. Harris
Alexandria, VA

I do not know if Phillip Johnson's arguments against "evolution as dogma" are correct. But the "naturalism" arguments of William B. Provine against those of Johnson present a problem that is even more puzzling than those found in the evolution debate.

The problem is this: If Provine is correct in asserting that there is no free will and that everything can be explained by a philosophy of naturalism, then every phenomenon in the universe, from the Big Bang to Provine's own thought processes, exists as a natural phenomenon and *only* as a natural phenomenon, i.e., something with no value. All that can be said is: what is, is.

If this is the case, however, then why is Provine critical of Johnson for reaching certain conclusions about evolution? If Provine's naturalism is correct, Johnson was no more "free" in reaching those conclusions than an apple is from falling off a tree, and Provine was no more free in espousing naturalism than water is from boiling at a certain temperature.

Gareth Nelson points out in his response to Johnson that "human judgment . . . is the only source of error on this planet." But Provine tells us that "free will," i.e., the ability to choose, is one of those "lofty desires" that are "hopeless," in a category with the existence of God, meaning in life, and life after death. Yet somehow—they do not tell us how—the naturalists, in expressing their thoughts, stand above the processes of nature, because they tell us that the movements of matter and anti-matter that make up *their* thought processes have value (they are "correct") above and beyond the various material processes that form them. Provine believes "modern evolutionary biology is true." In what sense can it be "true" if naturalism tells us that choosing between true and false is a hopeless desire?

Dr. Provine may say—indeed, must say, as a naturalist—that I am fooling myself in believing that what I am writing is a product of my "free will." Perhaps he is right—but if he is, why is his illusion "better" than mine, since, if all that can be said ultimately is "What is, is," there can be no value, only the movement of matter in various forms, over which neither he nor I have control?

The fact that he believes he "prefers" his view can theoretically be traced to further movements of matter and anti-matter (the peculiarities of sub-atomic phenomena do not change the structure of the naturalist argument in the least), to which he must apply another "value" judgment, in an infinite regression, because that judgment is once again matter in motion, and nothing more.

If Provine's theory of naturalism is wrong, then it is wrong. But if it is right, it is neither right nor wrong—it just is. The only way the naturalists can win the game is by sneaking in a ghost of transcendent "meaning" into their material thought-machines—exactly what they have been accusing believers of for years.

William F. Gavin
McLean, VA

Phillip Johnson's argument concerning Darwinian evolution ignores an important consideration: the (enormously) small probability that a system of higher order will slowly evolve from a system of lower order (second law of thermodynamics).

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This is not to say that higher order cannot spontaneously arise from lower order, only that the likelihood is vanishingly small *unless* the system is far from equilibrium in a thermodynamic sense. However, Darwinian evolution with its small incremental steps must be very close to equilibrium, which seems to violate the second law.

Stephen Jay Gould's "punctuated equilibrium" in which marked changes occur over short time spans may be consistent with highly non-equilibrium physical systems (Ilia Prigogine's theories of self-organization and the closely related "chaos theory" popularized by James Gleick may be applicable to the "evolutionary" process). One possibility is that gene systems may pass into some sort of short-lived "chaotic" pattern. When the chaos dies out, whatever gene systems that are left are "frozen" and we have the new life forms. Those poorly adapted then die out and the rest survive until the next period of chaos. Although Johnson refers to Gould as a Darwinist, I dispute the claim. Darwinians are "equilibrium people"; Darwin himself was severely limited by the state of scientific knowledge of his day. The second law had not yet been completely formulated nor do I know of any evidence that he was more than cursorily conversant in the physical science that existed at the time.

I have ignored "creation science" because, as several of the critics have pointed out, it isn't science. . . . On the other hand, a number of scientists including some of Johnson's critics have invited the intrusion of the "creationists" by wrongly suggesting or implying that science can find an answer to every question that arises in nature. Why do people who pride themselves on their dedication to scientific practices—and by implication intellectual honesty—cling so tightly to dogma such as classical Darwinism which is so highly suspect? I submit that it stems from two sources, heavy intellectual investment in the status quo and reluctance to admit that "I don't know." It was once thought that the methods of the physical and biological sciences could be extended to the social realm (e.g., "scientific Marxism"). Now that the proponents of this thesis have been humbled, maybe the physical and biological scientists should learn some humility.

Robert C. Whitten
Cupertino, CA

Phillip Johnson's assertion that philosophical naturalism has been smuggled into the definition of "science" to assist the acceptance of evolution is quite correct. The scientific methodology for discovering and verifying knowledge is limited to that which arrives through our natural senses, but the scientific spirit should be friendly toward knowledge from any source. Science is incapable of peering into the supernatural realm, but neither can it rule it out *a priori*. Therefore, science should not arrogantly say that all correct hypotheses *must* be natural.

I am surprised at Irving Kristol's rebuttal. He calls creationism a "pseudo-scientific doctrine" and "literal biblical faith" that has no place in scientific instruction. Other responders also cited this unremitting ACLU and media falsehood, but Kristol should know better since his wife, Gertrude Himmelfarb, has written so brilliantly on *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*. He fails to make the distinction between biblical creationism (which is legitimate in its sphere) and scientific creationism, which is that body of scientific evidence that militates against the evolutionary hypothesis and should be welcome in any scientific arena, including the classroom.

Scientific creationism . . . is what we creationists sought to restore to our public school classrooms in recent state laws. As things stand now, evolution is the only scientific hypothesis since the Ptolomaic cosmology that has been protected from scientific criticism through force of court edict. This is glaringly contrary to the spirit of science.

Frank Vosler
Creation Research,
Science Education Foundation
Columbus, OH

Phillip E. Johnson's article raised some important issues but missed a major irony: Those who worship at the temple of scientism share assumptions with biblical fundamentalists. Biblical fundamentalists claim that they are able to read scriptural texts without interpreting them. Scriptural texts supposedly "say" something independent of interpretive acts.

Scientistic fundamentalists claim that empirical data "say" something independent of the interpreter's art. These data, they aver, support the doctrine of naturalistic evolution, the dogma that naturalistic evolution is a fact and not an inference.

Fundamentalists of either stripe carefully avoid any consideration of philosophical hermeneutics. Whatever is understood is understood in terms of interpretive acts. In each interpretive act something of the interpreter's subjectivity is cast into the texts or data that are interpreted. Jimmy Swaggart and Stephen Jay Gould reach different conclusions about evolution not only on rational grounds but also on the basis of who they are and what beliefs they bring to their interpretive acts. . . .

To be a fundamentalist, in the pejorative sense, a person must be ready to pronounce *ipse dixits* that portray interpreted reality as uninterpreted and free from any taint of the values underlying inferential processes. The basis of such a readiness, of course, is located not in intellectual error but in a flaw of moral character.

All that I have written above, naturally, is by way of interpretation.

Leon McKenzie
Indianapolis, IN

Several years ago, my young daughter was watching a PBS show on evolution. When I started to interject a little religious footnote, she said, "Be quiet, I want to see how God did this."

One can get quite tangled up for nothing over the idea that evolution is in conflict with creationism. In Genesis, God reveals that creation was sequential and not all at once.

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God's "day" is not our day. His could be a billion years, or an instant. He is not limited by the finite values that men place on the sun coming up and going down. . . .

I find it comforting knowing that I am created. One has a certain kinship with trees and sunsets. Yet [that knowledge] also imposes certain limitations and responsibilities. [It is strange that] for some people it is easier to believe that they slithered into existence unassisted.

Nancy E. Hanel
Ijamsville, MD

I found Phillip Johnson's "Evolution as Dogma" most instructive. I am not a master in science or theology, but a run-of-the-mill Jesuit. . . .

Science says there is no doubt whatsoever about the *fact* of evolution. I agree. The dictionary defines evolution as any process of formation or growth. The fact is obvious to everyone that the infant evolves into the adult. What science defines as evolution is a continuous genetic adaptation of organisms or species to the environment by selection, hybridization, inbreeding, and mutation by which process the amoeba eventually becomes an elephant. That fact is not yet established by evidence anywhere.

Theology says that God is the sole source and creator of all that has been, is now, or ever will be. For this also there is no empirical evidence. It is inherently a religious doctrine, a belief based on historical testimony of prophets claiming inspiration from God. . . .

Both science and religion are dealing with the same subject, the phenomena of nature. They disagree because they have differing metaphysical principles. Science says everything proceeds from a cause, a continuous genetic adaptation of the amoeba or other primary organism. Religion says that God is that cause, the first and absolute cause.

Both answers are hypothetical in trying to fit evidence to reality in accord with primary assumptions: nothing is if God is not, or, nature is automatic. Science deduces its conclusion from curious material data; religion accepts its explanation from spiritual sources. . . . The religious hypothesis says that the Creator has endowed all things according to their natures with the potentials for growth, change, and modification in the various environments of this earth through successive generations.

This is the evidence of reality everyone experienced and accepted—pagans, Jews, Hindus, Muslims, Christians—until Darwin returned from the Galapagos with another hypothesis that begat modern reliance upon physical science to explain (hypothetically) who we are and why we're here. Take your choice.

John J. Barrett, S.J.
Brooklyn, NY

Religious Freedom Imperiled

Many thanks for "Polygamy, Peyote, and the Public Peace" (The Public Square, October 1990). It confirms what I've gradually come to suspect: Justice Antonin Scalia is a scary sort of guy.

I hadn't paid that much attention to the *Smith* case. As a former narcotics agent, my initial sympathies were with the state. After all, you can't justify *everything* via "free exercise" of religion, e.g., satanic child sacrifice or abortion. How would prolifers like me feel if, following a legal resolution of prenatal personhood, members of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR) tried to claim an "abortion right" rooted in the First Amendment? They'd be hooted out of court, I hope.

Nonetheless, what's disturbing about this case is Scalia's determination that a state need not provide a credibly overriding reason to encroach upon religious practice. Richard John Neuhaus is right: Scalia is a strict majoritarian. (Witness his finding in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* that abortion may be asserted as "a liberty interest.") As such, he basically doesn't want to do what he's supposed to be doing as a justice of the Supreme Court, i.e., defending individual rights and (legitimate) liberties as *fundamental* to our law.

Evidence indicates that Scalia is every bit as opposed to the doctrine of natural law and fundamental rights as was (is?) Robert Bork. . . . Bork maintained that our judicial system "can have nothing to do with any absolute set of truths existing independently and depending on God or the nature of the universe." . . .

Stephen Settle
New Holstein, WI

I wholeheartedly agree with Richard John Neuhaus that *Employment Division v. Smith* is a shockingly bad decision. Since Neuhaus raises a comparison with the *Dred Scott* decision, however, it is worth noting one important difference. *Dred Scott* held that the Constitution forbade any government attempt to limit slavery in the territories—and by foreclosing any such action, the Court helped precipitate the Civil War. By contrast, the recent peyote decision, although it rejected the Native Americans' claim of constitutional right, permits states and the federal government to pass laws protecting religious conduct.

Such a measure has been introduced in Congress: the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, sponsored by Congressmen Stephen Solarz and Paul Henry, would reinstate the requirement that the government prove a "compelling" interest in order to justify criminalizing conduct that is religiously motivated. Although the peyote decision is bad, the Court would have done far worse to hold (as some on the secular left have urged) that any attempt to exempt religious conduct from the law is unconstitutional advancement of religion. Unlike the peyote decision, such folly could not be corrected legislatively.

Thomas C. Berg
Chicago, IL

The main point made by Richard John Neuhaus, and the one that is most disturbing to me, because it is

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so unfounded, is that the *Smith* decision makes the free exercise clause "null and void" and leaves religious rights "stripped of their constitutional status" and "naked in the face of state power."

The trouble with such an argument is that it assumes that the free exercise clause guarantees a right to religion-based exemptions. Such an assumption, however, is simply not warranted. It overlooks two basic facts. First, it was not until 1963, in *Sherbert v. Verner,* that the Supreme Court declared that such a right existed, and even then, its declaration was ambiguous in nature because the law involved in that case from which an exemption was sought was not religion-neutral. (It allowed unemployment compensation to be given to persons who refused for religious reasons to work on Sunday but denied it to persons who refused for religious reasons to work on Saturday.)

Moreover, although Justice Scalia can perhaps be criticized for saying, "*We have never held* that an individual's religious beliefs excuse him from compliance with an otherwise valid law prohibiting conduct that the State is free to regulate" (emphasis added), and for distorting some of the Court's free exercise decisions after *Sherbert,* such as *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), the fact remains that the doctrine that persons have a constitutional right to religion-based exemptions has had a very tenuous existence. Aside from *Yoder* and a few unemployment compensation cases, the Court has refused to use the doctrine to protect religious practices that conflicted with valid laws. I ask you, therefore, if it is so obvious that the free exercise clause guarantees a right to religion-based exemptions, then why did it take so long and why has it been so difficult for the Supreme Court to see the obvious?

The second basic fact that Neuhaus overlooks in assuming that the free exercise clause guarantees a right to religion-based exemptions is that there is no clear direct historical evidence—at least none that I have been able to find after years of searching—that that clause was originally intended to create such a right. In fact, what is abundantly clear is that many of the early Americans most identified with the cause of religious freedom, namely, Roger Williams, Isaac Backus, John Leland, and Thomas Jefferson, explicitly denied that the idea of religious freedom entailed a right, natural or constitutional, to be excused from having to obey valid laws that other persons were required to obey. They may have believed that Christians and other religious persons were morally bound to disobey laws that conflicted with the demands of their religion or conscience, but they did not believe that the government was required to let them disobey with impunity.

One passage by James Madison, taken out of context, is simply not enough to make your case. It must be read in light of other passages, for example, his proposed draft of the article dealing with religious freedom at the Virginia Constitutional Convention of 1776. It reads in part as follows: "All men are equally entitled to the full and free exercise of it [religion], according to the dictates of conscience; and *therefore* . . . no man or class of men, ought, on account of religion to be invested with peculiar emoluments or privileges, nor subjected to any penalties or disabilities, unless, under color of religion, the preservation of equal liberty and the existence of the State be manifestly endangered." (emphasis added) . . .

Ellis M. West
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA

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FIRST THINGS
JANUARY 1991

The Death of Religious Higher Education

From time to time, a set of concerns reaches something like a critical mass. Familiar discontents vaguely felt turn into more focused anxieties, and then, all of a sudden it seems, a passel of scholars arrives at a similar analysis of what has gone so thoroughly wrong—and some similar ideas of what might be done about it.

If anyone is inclined to dismiss talk about the "death" of religious higher education as hyperbole, we urge him to reserve judgment until he has read with care George Marsden's article in this issue, "The Soul of the American University." Marsden is by no means alone in his rendering of this doleful tale. Richard Hutcheson, Senior Fellow of the Institute on Religion and Public Life (RPL), recently stirred salutary controversy with an article in the *Christian Century* depicting the subtle slide when colleges that once described themselves as "Christian" now can bring themselves to say no more than that they are "church-related." James Davison Hunter of the University of Virginia and James Burtchaell of Notre Dame, both active in the programs of RPL, are engaged in impressive long-range studies of evangelical and Roman Catholic higher education, respectively. And last October the Vatican issued a major and urgent document, *Ex Corde Ecclesia* ("From the Heart of the Church"), on the importance of Catholic universities being Catholic.

Also in October, RPL convened a scholars conference on "Religion and the Open University." The title of the conference reflects the fact that, according to many educators, the single highest value of the modern university is "openness." The reality, however, is that the university is not open to religion. This is true of numerous schools that were established by churches with the explicit purpose of advancing Christian thought and life but today are embarrassed by any mention of their religiously particularistic past. The list is a prestige roll, if not an honor roll, of American education: Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Chicago, Brown, Vassar, Haverford, Williams, Smith, Dartmouth, Duke, Emory, Vanderbilt, Syracuse, Southern California, and on and on.

Some oldline Protestant denominations still disburse millions of dollars each year to "their" universities and colleges. The chief reason seems to be to maintain the illusion that such schools are still Christian, or even church-related in a way that might make a difference. The schools are glad enough to accept the money, on condition that the churches ask for nothing in return. One church executive in charge of dispensing millions was recently pressed on what he meant by saying that a major university was, in some significant sense, Christian. After some thought, he indicated that a Christian university is one in which Christian students can find an opportunity to grow in the knowledge of their faith. But surely, it was pointed out, the university in question also offered opportunities for Buddhist students to grow in the knowledge of their faith. Does that make it a Buddhist university? The executive allowed as how he would want to give that more thought.

The story told by George Marsden in this issue is unremittingly discouraging. It is in no way alarmist, but the reality it describes is indeed alarming. Perhaps it is much too late to do much about the prestige schools that have long since abandoned their founding purpose. Marsden and others are not resigned to that, however. At the above-mentioned conference there were heartening reports about authentic religious teaching (not just teaching *about* religion) taking place at some of those schools, as well as at state universities that never had a religious association. In some religious studies departments, it is becoming more acceptable, *mirabile dictu*, for believers to teach without disguising the fact that they are believers. This is a trend importantly encouraged by Robert Wilken of the University of Virginia, also a contributor to this journal, in his presidential address to the American

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Academy of Religion this past year. Promising changes are afoot, even if they are at this point little more than the recognition that something must be and can be done.

Marsden, like most people who have studied the matter, has no certain prescriptions for what to do or how to do it. Insisting on genuine pluralism might be one way to open the closed university. Others say that the jig is up with most of higher education, and the only thing to do is to save the several hundred schools, mainly evangelical and Catholic, that still have a salvageable sense of religious identity. Yet others claim that almost all the existing schools are beyond hope. The thing to do, they say, is to establish new institutions of higher learning—in the full knowledge that they too will, in due course, probably abandon their founding purpose, thus making it necessary for another generation to start over again with its new schools. The prospect is one of a continuing cycle of identities established, dissolved, and established anew somewhere else. It is not a happy prospect, for it guarantees that religious seriousness about higher education will always remain on the distant periphery of the American university.

Editors possessed of a long-term intention to address problems of consequence must be constitutionally indisposed to despair. We believe that the death of religious higher education is not inevitable. We will therefore be publishing, in addition to George Marsden's important contribution, further analyses of what has gone wrong and proposals for a more hopeful future. With respect to religion and higher education, this has been the century of massive, and in many cases irretrievable, loss. Why that happened has to be more clearly and generally understood before we can begin to discern the promise that the next could be the century of renewal.

The beginning of wisdom on this subject is to recognize that the road to the unhappy present was indeed paved with good intentions. To be sure, there were relevant parties who made no secret of their hostility to religion. But, for the most part, the schools that lost or are losing their sense of religious purpose sincerely sought nothing more than a greater measure of "excellence." The problem is that they accepted uncritically definitions of excellence that were indifferent to, or even implicitly hostile to, the great concerns of religion. Few university presidents or department chairmen up and decided one day that they wanted to rid their institutions of the embarrassment of religion. It may reasonably be surmised that most believed that they were advancing a religious mission by helping their schools become like other schools—or at least more like "the best" of other schools. The language of academic excellence is powerfully seductive.

In 1967, Theodore Hesburgh, then president of Notre Dame, led a large number of Catholic educators in issuing what came to be called the Land O'Lakes Statement. It reads in part:

> The Catholic university today must be a university in the full modern sense of the word, with a strong commitment to and concern for academic excellence. To perform its teaching and research functions effectively, the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of every kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself. To say this is simply to assert that institutional autonomy and academic freedom are essential conditions of life and growth and indeed of survival for Catholic universities as for all universities.

For "Catholic" in that statement, substitute "Evangelical," "Presbyterian," "Methodist," "Lutheran," or "Jewish." The essential formula of Land O'Lakes is to be found in the "mission statement" of hundreds of colleges and universities that still maintain a plausible seriousness about being religious institutions. Not for long will they maintain it, for the formula is a perfect invitation to follow in the footsteps of those who have gone the way so incisively traced by George Marsden in this issue.

Opinion

David Byrne and the Curse of "Lifestyle"

Alan Jacobs

Lately I've been noting an interesting linguistic phenomenon: the all-purpose word. You come across it most often in slang, especially the slang of children and adolescents. Take "narly," for instance—a word which, in my limited acquaintance, seems capable of an almost infinite range of meanings, indicating anything from enthusiastic approval to violent hatred. "Narly" seems virtually content-free, its meaning determined entirely by context. But teenagers from Southern California don't have a monopoly on this particular form of linguistic creativity: educated adults can indulge it too. Let's consider an especially noteworthy example: the word "lifestyle."

Allan Bloom says (offhandedly) that the word comes

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from Nietzsche—who was certainly educated and intermittently adult—but since neither Bloom nor anyone else has come forward with the Original Source, dictionary-writers can find themselves in difficulties. My favorite everyday dictionary, the *American Heritage*, gives it a go: "A way of life or style of living that reflects the attitudes and values of an individual or group." Even if one disregards the fact that this definition leans pretty heavily on the very words it is attempting to define, it still doesn't say much. The new *Oxford English Dictionary* neatly avoids the quicksand by attributing the word to the Austrian psychiatrist Alfred Adler, citing as the only definition Adler's technical and specialized usage, and then quoting a whole series of uses of the word that owe nothing whatsoever to Adler.

It is palpably evident that "lifestyle," like its lower-class cousin "narly," possesses very little content. Yet, again like its cousin, within specific contexts, it can communicate a great deal. In fact, it may be capable of containing a whole philosophy in its two syllables—or so I've been thinking recently, as I listen to the rock group Talking Heads.

David Byrne, the leader and chief songwriter of Talking Heads, is an interesting fellow: there's a distinctive, a sharp and sardonic, strain of cultural criticism running through many of his songs that you don't find elsewhere. There are no unrequited loves in Byrne's songs; there are few people consumed by wants, driven by desires. Instead he writes about and for people who typically get exactly what they want, in large part because they have been conditioned by the world around them to desire what that world can provide: the right automobile; ethnic or trend-setting foods; a lucrative but not socially embarrassing job; a residence identifiable, in architecture and interior design, with a style that has a name. (Talking Heads' second album is called *More Songs About Buildings and Food.*) But the acquisition of such things is not Byrne's chief interest; rather, he wants to know what the acquirers do next, that is, what happens when you get what you want. For Byrne, "successful" people often bear a strong resemblance to the damned in Dante's *Inferno*, for, as Dante makes abundantly clear, in Hell you simply get for all eternity the life you chose on earth.

Dante and David Byrne are strange bedfellows to be sure, but the comparison can be supported by turning to one of Byrne's *tours de force*, a song—from the 1988 Talking Heads album, *Naked*—called "(Nothing but) Flowers." Byrne's "narrator" is a man who, with his Significant Other, has realized one of modernity's most deeply cherished fantasies: suddenly our familiar technological America is transformed into an idyllic, pastoral landscape, its natural beauty unspoiled by civilization. "Here we stand," the song begins (the melody almost comically sentimental, the rhythms straight out of African pop), "another Adam and Eve / waterfalls / the Garden of Eden."

But then comes a sudden and unexpected plaintiveness:

> From the age of the dinosaurs
> Cars have run on gasoline
> Where, where have they gone?
> Now it's nothing but flowers

Our protagonist now embarks upon a litany of bitter nostalgia: "This was a Pizza Hut / now it's all covered with daisies"; "We caught a rattlesnake / now we have something for dinner"; "If this is paradise / I wish I had a lawnmower." As he laments his fate, a chorus like that of a Greek tragedy softly but repeatedly calls out, "You got it, you got it"—you got what you asked for. And this new Adam himself ruefully admits, "I thought we'd start over / but I guess I was wrong."

Nature for him (he understands too late) is mere chaos, without form and void, until given meaning by human culture: "This used to be real estate / now it's only fields and trees." Trapped in what has proved to be not a fantasy but a nightmare, he finally cries out (the music stopping dead on the last word): "Don't leave me stranded here / I can't get used to this lifestyle."

It's a funny song, to be sure, and yet there's something chilling about that last line. But to explain why, I need to look away from Byrne for a moment.

Recently I was grading essays some of my students had written on Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, that famous novel of South Africa. Some of them were explaining how James Jarvis, a wealthy white farmer from Natal, is changed by his son's murder. What happens, through a complex set of events, is that Jarvis comes for the first time in his life actually to *see* the lives of his black neighbors and, eventually, to give them food and build them a church and (most crucially) forgive one of them, his son's murderer. Of this painful and extraordinary metamorphosis a number of students wrote that Jarvis experienced a "change in his lifestyle."

I mentioned these essays to one of my colleagues, who told me of some students of *his* who had written about Book IX of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which the Fall is described. He had asked what happens to Milton's Adam and Eve after the Fall, thinking of their sudden lust for each other (when formerly they had experienced only pure sexual love), their mutual recriminations and laying of blame, their alienation from the God who had been their friend, and so on. But some students said that Adam and Eve suffered a serious transformation of their "lifestyle."

"Well," one is tempted to think, "these aren't expert writers, after all; most of them are freshmen and sophomores, with little experience in literary analysis—or in life, for that matter. They will of course use the everyday words they know." True enough; but those words also represent the ideas they know, their intellectual and moral categories—the ones they have

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inherited from their elders or, more accurately, from whatever cultural institutions they consider authoritative. What are the moral implications of the word "lifestyle" in the context of James Jarvis' life, of Adam and Eve in the Garden?

If "lifestyle," as I said earlier, is a broad notion, it is also mighty thin, for it flattens all human activity to a single plane: the only dimension it recognizes is the dimension of choice. If all actions and attitudes are functions or components of one's style of living, then it would appear that one is free to choose whatever style one finds appropriate. This Lifestyle Supermarket is the fulfillment of one of our great cultural dreams: the Self, unencumbered by habit or tradition, exercising the right of pure freedom ordained for it before the foundation of the world, selecting those objects and features, those accoutrements and tendencies, those passions and trinkets which, gathered into its encompassing bosom, constitute its Lifestyle. But if even Adam and Eve, driven in rage and guilt from the Earthly Paradise to which they may never return, may be said to be forced into a new "lifestyle"—if, that is to say, some especially desirable items are permanently out of stock, but there are still others, only relatively less appealing, beckoning from the shelves—if this is what the Fall amounts to, then how is it possible to comprehend the full implications of suffering or loss of any kind, whether in Mozambique or in Romania or in the luxurious American suburb?

To pursue the consequences further, let us think back to David Byrne's new Adam. He has exercised his sovereign right of choice, and, against all expectation, he hates the world he has chosen. Perhaps he has chosen badly. But what if he had it to do all over again, but would do exactly the same thing? Or what if he chooses to return to the modern technological Paradise, only to (re-)discover that it too—of course, that's why he wished it away in the first place—is just another Hell? This dilemma, it seems to me, calls for reflection upon all those old fairy tales in which the holder of three unrestricted wishes manages nevertheless to screw things up: reading those stories as children, with considerable incredulity, we thought that in the same situation *we* would surely do better. But wisdom may consist not in the ability to choose well, but in the understanding that the power of choice itself has limits—precisely the limits that we, the fallen and partial choosers, have.

The real tragedy for Byrne's new Adam is not that he hates the world he has to live in; most of us feel a similar hate at least sometimes, without believing that such frustration makes us King Lear. The real tragedy is that, confronted by such a situation, the only words he has to describe and thus to deal with his pain derive from the worldview I have described: "I can't get used to this lifestyle." For if it is true that our young people, by using a certain vocabulary, also use a certain philosophy, then it is also true that when we embrace the philosophy of pure choice, we also embrace its vocabulary; and thus, when our choices do not satisfy us in the way that we believed so fervently they would, we are left not only with empty hands, but with no words capable of describing our emptiness.

It is commonly said that when apparently successful young people—honor students, athletes, class leaders—take their own lives, they do so because they feel enormous pressure to live up to the expectations of those around them. No doubt this is true. But I feel sure that many of them also experience the terrible blankness I have just described. Surely few genuinely wish that they had made other choices: they do not long to be drug addicts or dropouts; they see no "lifestyle" that seems superior to their own. But they feel no satisfaction from having made the "right" choices, and this feeling they cannot understand; nor, in many cases, can they get a convincing explanation from the people who originally told them what the right choices *were*. Perhaps they kill themselves, then, not because they suffer, but because they have no moral vocabulary with which to describe and hence to grasp their suffering.

When crotchety old grammarians complain about the debasement of language, often they are merely deploring change *per se*; other times they wax wroth over what seem to most of us relatively insignificant losses in precision, clarity, or beauty. But our language is being debased in the most profound sense when it loses the ability to discern and describe the lineaments of our moral lives. Christians who wish to speak "the language of the people"—and thus talk a lot about what makes up "the Christian lifestyle"—often assume that they can return to their own familiar "religious" language of grace and faith, sin and redemption, justice and mercy, even act and consequence, whenever they want. But the words, and the moral categories they represent, bequeathed to us by our ancestors through Bible, prayer book, and hymn are like most earthly things: they won't last long without attentive care. And neither will moral understanding itself. There is a kind of packrat principle useful to anyone contemplating cultural or linguistic change: don't be afraid of moving, but don't throw anything away unless you're sure you won't need it in the future.

Whether David Byrne would agree with any of my conclusions here, I can't say. He is probably not what I have half-suggested he is, a secular Kierkegaard with a postmodern method of indirect communication. He may be, in fact, merely an intelligent and resourceful cynic, preying (at least financially) on those he despises. If so, then one thing is pretty certain: we have the Dante we deserve.

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The New "Lapsed"

Peter J. Leithart

In the aftermath of the victory over Communist domination of Eastern Europe, previously hidden divisions are surfacing within the churches that played such a crucial role in that struggle. For example, the recent book on religion in the Soviet Union by Michael Bourdeaux of Keston College documents the current struggle between the Russian Orthodox and the Ukrainian Catholic churches over the Ukrainian church's property that Stalin seized and handed to the Russian Orthodox in 1946. "Turf struggles" of this kind will no doubt continue to threaten the churches of Eastern Europe and Russia.

Equally serious struggles loom ahead over what can be called the question of the "lapsed." It is well known that over the decades of Communist oppression, many Eastern European churchmen cooperated in one way or another with the regimes. Some, no doubt, were convinced Marxists; others were ignorant stooges of the Communist rulers; others were too weak to live a life of dissent; still others now defend their actions by saying that their minimal cooperation gave them opportunities to minister that would not otherwise have been available. The *Economist* recently reported on the growing tensions between those who "lapsed" and those who boldly opposed tyranny.

In this context, the history of the Donatist schism and particularly the anti-Donatist writings of St. Augustine (354-430) might be fruitfully studied. The Donatist schism originated in the years following the Great Persecution of Diocletian, which predated Augustine by several decades. Signs of impending schism appeared as early as 305, when the persecution was in full force, but there was no formal break until the persecution ended. The Donatists, named for one of their leading spokesmen, condemned the "lapsed," the "*traditores*" who had betrayed their faith during the terror of persecution by fleeing or handing over Bibles or other sacred books. The "Catholic" party, by contrast, counseled prudence and caution, and raised questions about the purity of the motives behind the Donatist thirst for martyrdom. After several fruitless efforts to restrain the Donatists, Constantine in 321 granted them full liberty of worship, though this toleration was denied by his successors.

In the time of Augustine, Donatist churches were still found throughout North Africa; there was a Donatist congregation in Hippo itself. For more than a decade, Augustine mounted an unrelenting verbal assault on the Donatists. In 412, the Donatist church was banned by imperial edict and driven underground, though there are hints that Donatism survived as late as the time of Gregory the Great (590-604).

Jaroslav Pelikan notes that the basic theological issue between Donatists and Catholics was "the causal connection between grace and perfection, or between the unity of the church and the holiness of the church." These large issues came to a focus in the practical question of whether ordinations and baptisms performed by *traditores* were valid. The Donatists insisted that sacraments were invalid if administered by a *traditor.* More than that, anyone ordained by or in communion with a *traditor* (including Augustine himself) was declared guilty by association.

Against this, Augustine stressed that the sacraments belonged to Christ and to His Church, and the piety or impiety of the administrator was irrelevant: "My origin is Christ, my root is Christ, my head is Christ." Augustine admitted that the *traditores* had sinned, and he was not averse to using the instruments of Church discipline when necessary. But so long as a minister was in union with the One Church, the sacraments he administered were valid. Baptism, he stressed, "belongs to Christ, regardless of who may give it."

Augustine's victory over the Donatists has often been characterized as a victory of objectivity and catholicity over subjectivity and sectarianism, a victory, to borrow Ernst Troeltsch's categories, of church over sect. This characterization is one-sided; Augustine's victory was also a victory of mercy and forbearance. The Church was, for Augustine, not so much a community of the holy as a school of holiness. The Church is always in pilgrimage; she will never, this side of the eschaton, be able to say that she has "arrived." Augustine's insight was in part a corollary of his doctrine of predestination, but it was just as much a product of his practical churchmanship. It is an empirically verifiable fact that the Church as it presently exists is a "mixed multitude," comprised of weak and strong, fearful and bold, those given to capitulation and those given to martyrdom.

Applying these Augustinian insights to the current situation of Eastern Europe is no easy task. Surely, there are degrees of betrayal and degrees of culpability. A bishop who actively propagandized for a Communist regime is more culpable than a layman who simply averted his eyes. There will doubtless be cases where the churches will have no choice but to take disciplinary action.

Yet the churches of Eastern Europe would do well to err on the side of mercy. Such an approach runs the risk of being attacked as "soft" by hardline anti-Communist leaders, but the counsel that the Church show mercy to the weak need not imply any compromise with Marxist-Leninist oppression. Instead, it arises from a recognition of the important role the Church can play in the coming decades of transition. Imprudent rigorism in the churches of Eastern Europe will only divide and weaken the Church, and vitiate her witness. An Augustinian Catholicity, by contrast, will give the Church an opportunity to play her central part in healing Eastern Europe's deeply divided societies.

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Islam and Modernity

Habib C. Malik

As Communism loses its menacing posture and its threat recedes globally, Western concentration is beginning to focus increasingly on an old and inscrutable foe: Islam. The vast natural resources of the Middle East, the birthplace of Islam, coupled with the inherent political instability of the region have hastened this shift of Western attention. The clash of opposing values between Islam and the West has recently been vividly played out in the sands of Arabia, where young American soldiers have come face to face with strict prohibitions placed by an alien culture on alcohol, women, freedom of expression, and freedom of worship. This "encounter in the desert" between the secular West and the closed Islamic society of Saudi Arabia raises basic age-old questions that transcend the narrow confines of any single crisis or set of historical circumstances: How compatible is Islam with modernity, democracy, and pluralism? What sort of relationship will Islam have with the West in the coming century?

Islam is a centuries-tested total outlook on life. There is a greater organic unity in Islam between the temporal and spiritual than is found in either Judaism or Christianity. This stems from the central concept of the Islamic *Umma*, the community of Muslims formed by Mohammed in the seventh century A.D. when he unified the scattered tribes of Arabia into a single supra-tribal structure that became a socio-political and metaphysical amalgam. Any member of the *Umma* who declared obedience to God and his Prophet and who fulfilled his prescribed duties as a Muslim was assured of rewards in the afterlife. As Islam grew and spread, diversity and internal conflict arose, but the notion of *Umma* remained paramount everywhere the religion found a foothold.

Two important implications of the *Umma* motif set Islam apart and they indicate the difficulties involved in reconciling it with modernity as understood in the West. First, Islam in its pristine form is theocratic: it makes no separation between church and state. Strict observance to the *Shari'a*, the Islamic law based on Koranic precepts and derivative guidelines extrapolated by early scholars of Islamic jurisprudence, remains normative in such places as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf sheikdoms, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and, to a certain extent, Pakistan. It is true that many Islamic countries have to one degree or another taken on the trappings of the modern nation-state, the product of more than 200 years of secularization and political development in the West. But even in the most open and externally westernized of Islamic countries, the underlying assumption remains that Muslims must eventually exercise political power and rule according to the *Shari'a* if they are to feel completely fulfilled as Muslims. Such countries are thus inherently unstable, open at any time to a sudden reassertion, in one form or another, of strict Islamic norms and practices. A worldview, therefore, in which politics and religion form an intricately woven tapestry and which in the *Shari'a* maintains a law unto itself presents formidable obstacles to hopes of its harmonious integration within the modern international order.

The second implication of the *Umma* perspective is attitudinal in nature and has to do with a deeply ingrained dualistic view of the world—a basic "us and them" syndrome. Islam divides the world into two distinct realms or abodes, the Abode of Islam and the Abode of War. Technically, the former encompasses the lands that are under Muslim control while the latter represents all other territories. But the dualism does not stop at this formal or geopolitical distinction; rather it penetrates the very psyche of individual Muslims, permeating their lives and determining their behavior. One not infrequently observes among Muslims an internalized double standard of behavior. They may, while travelling or residing temporarily in the West, abandon themselves to license, but abide by a system of rigid prohibitions and punishments back home. It is in any case the duty of the Muslim to preserve the Abode of Islam from contamination, and when possible to help enlarge it at the expense of the Abode of War where the "infidel" rules.

This division into two abodes among Muslims received reinforcement throughout the centuries from successive bloody confrontations with "the other": first the early Islamic conquests of the Near East and parts of Asia, and then the Crusades, the reconquest of Spain by the Christians, the decline and fall of the Ottoman Empire, and in more recent times the experience of Western imperialism and colonial domination as well as Hindu resistance in the Indian subcontinent. The historical experience has reinforced Islamic skepticism toward such Western concepts as modernity, with its secularizing bias, and democracy, with its tendency toward homogenization.

Nor has the Western ideal of religious pluralism any more likely chance of making much headway in Islamic societies where native non-Muslim minorities are, at best, tolerated as second-class citizens, or *dhimmis*. Jews and Christians, considered as "People of the Book," are assigned a special subordinate status in Muslim society and expected to abide by a set of specific restrictions, including the curtailment of freedom of expression. The Koran contains many passages with a strong anti-Jewish flavor, and through a Muslim misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, Christians came to be regarded as polytheists or tritheists (*Mushrikeen*), causing Muslim attitudes towards them to waver between ambivalence and outright hostility. Thus, reputed Muslim tolerance notwithstanding, the overall record of treatment of non-Muslim minorities in Islamic societies through-

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out the centuries is disappointing when measured by Western human rights standards.

It would seem from all this that achieving compatibility between Islam and the West is a thankless and prohibitive undertaking. Indeed, unless new interpretations of established theological and dogmatic positions are hazarded by authoritative Muslims—interpretations that blunt the sharp contrasts between Islam and modernity by making serious attempts to modify and reconcile the best insights of both—the future of Islam's relations with the West will be bleak. The problem is that since around the tenth century fewer and fewer efforts at *ijtihad*, or the reinterpretation and reformulation of doctrine to respond to new challenges and realities, have occurred within Islam as a whole.

The nature of Islam and the intense Muslim reverence for the Koran as God's very words confer a certain finality on early dogmas and practices, making it exceedingly difficult to envisage or plan any significant alterations, let alone departures from the textual understanding. Furthermore, even if such bold reassessments were to take place, the problems of legitimizing them sufficiently within the Muslim world so that they might strike roots and bear fruit would be nothing short of awesome. Experience has shown, in fact, that it is regressive steps, reassertions of traditional views, that throughout Islamic history have tended to receive easier legitimization than attempts to move in the opposite direction.

There are, in the history of Islam, a few cautiously encouraging precedents that may offer a faint glimmer of hope for future *ijtihad* with legitimacy. One of these is the *Mu'tazila* movement of the eighth and ninth centuries that was subsequently suppressed. The *Mu'tazila* originated in Baghdad and founded the discipline of *kalam* (theology), a movement eventually dominated by conservatives. They adhered to a strict monotheism and emphasized the utter transcendence of the divine. But they also regarded the Koran as created rather than supernatural and coeternal with God, and they believed in human free will and the importance of reason.

A millennium later, towards the end of the nineteenth century, a reformist movement arose among certain Muslim thinkers in Egypt who had some exposure to European culture. Members of this group, the Muslim cleric Mohammad 'Abduh in particular, harked back to the rationalism of the *Mu'tazila* in an attempt to harmonize Islam with Western liberal ideas. This neo-Mu'tazilism developed a small following in intellectual and religious circles and remained alive for a few decades before lapsing into oblivion. A similar reformist movement arose about the same time in India and culminated in the innovative figure of Mohammad Iqbal, who might be said to have invented the idea of Pakistan. But here too ground-breaking reforms were unable to gain lasting recognition and legitimacy.

While these experiments are significant if only to indicate that no system, no matter how insular and self-contained, can remain indefinitely ossified and impervious to external influences, they ought not to be romanticized as many Western scholars have tended to do. No process of *ijtihad*—understood as a radical transformation of Islam—can be measured in anything but geological time. Realistic expectations of peaceful and creative coexistence between Islam and the West must for the foreseeable future dispense with wishful anticipation of speedy evolution within Islam that would lead to something like a Koranic higher criticism. This means that hopes for coexistence can only be based on mutually beneficial practical arrangements, and on the secular West's sober recognition that ultimate identity in the Islamic world will continue to be determined more by religion than by any other force.

To reduce the possibility of militant Islam moving beyond being a nuisance factor to becoming a threat to world peace and order, the West must continue to be vigilant, particularly with regard to the proliferation of nuclear technology. It is necessary that a policy of containment be devised that will at the same time allow for the free flow of ideas and the promotion of human interaction. The West should attempt to depoliticize its dealings with Islam enough to introduce in diplomatic and other relations the human dimension, thereby offsetting the present inordinate emphasis on material interests. This would open the way for the West to insist on a genuine exchange of respect and reciprocity in treatment, especially as regards issues of human rights and non-Muslim minorities living equitably under Islam.

Even under the best of circumstances, there will remain into the indefinite future a basic irreducible incompatibility between Islam and modernity that will generate perpetual friction. That being understood, however, the secular materialism of modernity could well benefit from a measured infusion of the primordial spirituality of Islam. And assuming a West faithful to its deepest spiritual wellsprings, Islam too is bound to be challenged and affected by prolonged peaceful contact with a civilization alien to itself.

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Capitalism and the Disorders of Modernity

Peter L. Berger

For most people in America, all those not familiar with the complicated ideological positioning on the right end of the political spectrum, the term "conservative" evokes images of the board room, the country club, and the Episcopal church located not far from the latter. In other words, the term is associated with the capitalist elite of the society. This is not at all so in Europe. At least until the advent of Margaret Thatcher, "conservatism" there tended to be associated with, at best, a grudging acceptance of the capitalist economy, and frequently with decidedly anti-capitalist sentiments. In many European countries even today (for example, in Germany), those in favor of capitalism are called "liberals" (causing great confusion, in addition to other things, among Germans trying to make sense of American politics). "Conservatives," by contrast, are people who favor such quaint causes as good manners or the restoration of the Bavarian monarchy.

The reason for this difference in usage between the two continents is rooted in history. In Europe modern capitalism emerged out of a long struggle with the *ancien régime*, at the end of which the bourgeoisie triumphed over the forces of "reaction" embodied in the old aristocratic elites. America never had an *ancien régime*, nor did it ever have a genuine aristocracy. The closest it came was in parts of the Old South, but even there the self-styled aristocrats would have been regarded by their European counterparts as bourgeois parvenus, and pretty barbarian ones at that.

America, from the beginning, was essentially a bourgeois society; American capitalism emerged, not out of a feudal past, but as a novel creation on historically virgin territory. Here, then, the term "conservative" is usually employed in its original, literal sense, describing those who want to preserve the status quo. This status quo, however, is precisely that of bourgeois capitalism; there is no other (except for Southern agrarians and their scattered ideological descendants, largely limited to the readership of *Southern Partisan*). In Europe, at least until Mrs. Thatcher's petit-bourgeois takeover of the Tory world, "conservatives" were those who wanted to preserve this or that tattered remnant of the order that *preceded* bourgeois capitalism; the most inveterate among them, on the wilder shores of the right, hoped against hope that this order might be restored as a whole.

There is, of course, an American right that has ideological affinities with European conservatism, but it has little if any social base. It either remains in a subculture mainly inhabited by intellectuals, or it enters into uneasy alliances with groups that share its antagonisms but very few of its positive convictions (such as, for example, the populist New Right, a sweatily lower-middle-class movement that any would-be aristocrat can only tolerate for Machiavellian reasons of strategy). The cultural and political difficulties caused by these facts for Americans with conservative convictions cannot be pursued here. The point to be made is that, in the American context, a certain mental effort is required to ask the question, "How can conservatives be in favor of capitalism?" (Most Americans would be naively inclined to say: "But are not all conservatives in favor of capitalism?") Let it be assumed that the mental effort has been made: Why, then, might conservatives *not* be in favor of capitalism?

The principal reason why conservatives might be antagonistic to capitalism can be summed up in Joseph Schumpeter's well-known description of capitalism as "creative destruction." In this, of course, Schumpeter's view of capitalism is fully consonant with Karl Marx's (though Schumpeter agreed with very few of Marx's other notions about the phenomenon). Capitalism is the most dynamic economic arrangement in human history. From its beginnings in England it brought

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about not just an economic transformation of gigantic proportions, but a social, political, and cultural revolution. It shook the old aristocratic caste system to its foundations, bringing forth a highly mobile class system in which (to the intense chagrin of conservative observers like the Duc de Saint-Simon) people coming from nowhere attained positions of power and privilege. The political *ancien règime* collapsed in stages, and in different ways, in the events surrounding the English, American, and French revolutions. And the rising bourgeoisie, the new capitalist elite, created a new culture that put its mark on every facet of behavior and thought. To be sure, the nineteenth century was the triumphant age of this capitalist revolution and an argument can be made that some of these triumphs were diminished in the twentieth; thus World War I marked a cultural watershed after which the bourgeois world was never the same again.

Nevertheless, the dynamism of the capitalist economy continues in an essentially unbroken way today, and indeed it has found new incarnations (notably in East Asia) and has created a worldwide structure (the "world system" so much deplored by leftists) that reaches into virtually every corner of the globe. Now, one may view this dynamism as finally good, bad, or a mixed bag, but there can be little doubt about its *anti-traditional* thrust. Before its dynamism *all* traditions—social, political, and cultural—shake, wilt, often disappear, invariably change. Class replaces caste, democracy overthrows venerable authorities of every sort, modern rationality puts in doubt every handed-down certitude. Those with a stake in traditional hierarchies and beliefs, therefore, cannot be faulted if they look upon capitalism as an adversary force. One must point out that modernization (the impact on human life of scientific rationality and its technological achievements) is not *necessarily* linked to capitalism; the appearance of modern socialist societies demonstrates this, and modernization under socialist auspices (say, in Soviet Central Asia) is no less subversive of tradition than capitalist-driven modernization (say, across the border in Pakistan or in the Shah's Iran). Still, one cannot gainsay the tradition-dissolving efficacy of capitalism.

Capitalism is also disturbing to conservatives because it is, or appears to be, amoral in the way it distributes its rewards. Every traditional order assumes that its privileges are based on virtue of some sort, be it inherited or achieved. The outside observer of such an order may well conclude that this is a spurious claim—monarchs may be degenerate, knights may be gangsters, saints may be frauds. What is troubling about capitalism, though, is that it has relatively few legitimations in terms of virtue to begin with. Adam Smith's view of the common good emerging from the selfish acts of individuals has been the conceptual paradigm for this capitalist amoralism, for the critics of capitalism even more than for its advocates.

Conservatives tend to think in terms of some scheme of distributive justice. This, it should be emphasized, is not necessarily an egalitarian notion; it is precisely on the basis of virtue that highly *unequal* distributions of privilege, power, and prestige are traditionally justified—the *droit de seigneur*, if you will. Capitalism recognizes no *seigneurs*. The market rewards and punishes individuals impersonally, without regard to the moral qualities that allegedly distinguish them. Success in the capitalist game is typically the result of a mixture of ability and luck; it is difficult to moralize the former (though some have tried, from Benjamin Franklin to George Gilder), impossible to moralize the latter.

In recent years (this was not so in an earlier period of leftist thought, definitely not in the case of Marx), one of the major attacks on capitalism from the left has been because of its alleged inequality. This is a major misperception, rooted not in a comparison of capitalist societies with empirically existing non-capitalist ones but rather with a meta-empirical ideal of equality, by comparison with which every existing society must appear to be grossly unjust. Capitalism creates societies that are *less* unequal than almost all traditional societies this side of Stone Age primitivism, and (as we now know) certainly *also* less unequal than all existing socialist societies to date. Conservatives attached to tradition have always recognized this fact much more clearly than socialists of various stripes, and it is just *because of* this fact that they did not care for capitalism.

The Duc de Saint-Simon, that old gossip misanthropically recording the sociological panorama at the court of Versailles, is the prototype of this conservative antagonism to capitalist equality. He carefully and contemptuously observes the ascendancy of the new bourgeoisie, people who had nothing to recommend them except money, most of it (he believed) obtained in morally dubious ways. He is outraged by the claims made by these grubby upstarts to privileges previously reserved to the noble families of France, and he predicted (correctly, it turned out) that the monarchy would yet regret its use of these parvenus against the nobility. The same fact was clearly understood and well articulated by Georg Simmel, in his *Philosophy of Money*: Capitalism is the modern money economy, and money is the great equalizer. As the American saying has it, the color of everybody's money is green—no matter if the blood is blue, or (more important today) if the skin is black or brown.

As already noted, capitalism can no longer (as it still could in Marx's time) be presented as the only modern economic system. It is, however, that form of economic life that was instrumental in bringing about the modern world; the industrial revolution was the offspring of a marriage between capitalist economics and the immense technological power made possible by the new science. Capitalism is further that economic system which, at least to the present, has

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been able to deal most efficiently with the challenges of modernity—beginning with the demographic challenge of how best to feed, house, and clothe the rapidly increasing multitude of human beings now (because of the modern transformation) inhabiting the earth. Thus the association between capitalism and modernity, while not exclusive, is profound. Once again, one cannot fault those who dislike modernity and, therefore, are antagonistic to capitalism.

Capitalist modernity is tumultuous, unpredictable, like a volcano in constant eruption (Emile Durkheim speaks of a great tempest, sweeping away all the old forms of social organization). Those who basically affirm modernity see these qualities as making possible a new rationality and a new freedom in human affairs (so did Simmel and Durkheim). But to many conservatives these same qualities constitute a threat of disintegration and chaos. Against this threat they will evoke visions of order, of all-embracing meaning, very often couched in the language of religion. Thus Roman Catholic social thought has consistently held up an "integralist" vision of order against the disorders of the modern age; to this day, hostility or at any rate suspiciousness with regard to capitalism has also been characteristic of this stream of ideas. Thus the anti-capitalist counter-positions of much conservative thought are quite clear: Continuity is posited against constant change, virtue against the calculus of the market, hierarchy against egalitarianism, and, finally, order against the threat of chaos.

It is very important to understand that many of the attacks on capitalism from the left (defined very broadly as consisting of people with some version of the socialist ideal) are very similar indeed to the attacks launched much earlier (and in some instances still launched today, especially in Europe and Latin America) by the old conservative right. Already in the nineteenth century the depiction of the social evils of capitalism by, respectively, Friedrich Engels and Benjamin Disraeli are remarkably similar (not to mention those of John C. Calhoun, who used the same charges to defend the South against the moral arguments of the Abolitionists).

Capitalism as a reality is condemned as inhuman and unjust, regardless of whether the counter-posited society, more just and more humane, is projected into the future (as with all socialists prior to the Russian Revolution and with many after that) or believed to have existed in the past (as with many conservatives). The left too deplores the "creative destruction" of capitalism, its seemingly mindless disregard of whatever institutions stand in the way of its economic rationale. The left too laments the alleged amoralism of the market, demanding that it should be replaced by a political mechanism that distributes rewards on the basis of a moral ideal of justice. And the left too engages in visions of order, community, "solidarity" counter-posited against the chaotic libertinism of the market economy.

There the similarities might be thought to end. After all, the left hardly hankers after hierarchy, and it can hardly be called anti-modern. Perhaps so, but an argument can be made that even here there are interesting affinities between right and left versions of anti-capitalism. It is quite true that the left, especially in this century, has legitimated its goals in egalitarian terms. If one accepts this egalitarian rhetoric at face value, then indeed one would say that here the anti-capitalism of the left differs from its conservative analogue. But it should not be taken at face value. It is not irrelevant to repeat that empirically existing socialist societies have institutionalized massive inequalities. The now-moribund Soviet *nomenklatura* system is by no means unique in this respect; indeed, something like it has been set up with monotonous regularity in socialist societies everywhere, including those in which Soviet influence has been negligible or absent.

But the egalitarian rhetoric of Western socialists, many of whom no longer admire any existing socialist society but look to an as yet unrealized socialism of the future, should also be looked at skeptically. Are these people really against *all* inequalities? Or only against those that the market produces? One does not have to be a psychoanalyst to suspect that beneath the rhetoric there lurks the double hydra of *ressentiment* and envy: The offensiveness of the market is *not* that it rewards unequally, but that it rewards *the undeserving*—intellectually ludicrous entrepreneurs rather than . . . well, rather than superior types like you and me! Read this way, the anti-capitalism of the left is not all that much different from that of the Duc de Saint-Simon, except that it is now the virtue of alleged intellect that is evoked rather than the virtue of aristocratic lineage. In either case, an elitist ideal is counter-posited against the crass egalitarianism of an economy in which "money talks."

Also, of course, the left cannot be simply described as anti-modern. It does not, it is true, have a stake in tradition. It conceives of itself as rational, even scientific (Marxism, let it not be forgotten amid its present debris, has always thought of itself as a science), and socialists almost without exception believe in some version of the modern myth *par excellence*, which is the myth of progress. So far, so good. But it can be argued that much of the appeal of socialist ideologies, emphatically including almost all forms of Marxism, has been in its capacity to *synthesize* modern and anti-modern themes. Thus socialists want to be modern men, bearers of rationality and progress, the true heirs of the Enlightenment. But at the same time they embrace an ideal of community that is profoundly anti-modern, they want to abolish at least two of the major societal dichotomies achieved by modernity (that between the economic and the political orders, and that between the private and the public sphere), and they dream of a harmonious social order that has

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all the hallmarks of traditionalist nostalgia. This strange synthesis was there from the beginnings of modern socialism; read, for instance, Marx's vision of how the division of labor will have been abolished under communism. But this linkage between modernizing and counter-modernizing themes within socialist movements and ideologies has been particularly visible in recent years. In the Third World, socialism has entered into alliances with every conceivable sort of anti-modern, traditionalist impulse—from the "Islamic socialism" of Middle Eastern revolutionaries to Julius Nyerere's *Ujamaa* to the "New Christendom" of Latin American liberation theology. And in Western societies the linkage between political radicalism and the so-called Age of Aquarius (a veritable orgy of counter-modernizing themes) dominated the late 1960s and early 1970s; even more recently the left/right convergences in the Green movement manifest the same affinities.

In sum, there are good reasons why many conservatives have disliked capitalism. Some of these reasons are remarkably similar to those of the left. The possibilities of political alliances inherent in this affinity cannot concern us here (probably there are major barriers due to class). But there is another issue to be raised: Is there another answer possible to our earlier question? Could conservatives be in favor of capitalism after all?

The answer will, of course, at least partially depend on how one defines the term "conservative." If one means by it a position in favor of the defense of the status quo, no matter what the status quo may be, then the question resolves itself into one of geography. In America, as already noted, "conservatives" will inevitably have to be pro-capitalist. But, by the same kind of usage, the term "conservative" is today applied to people in the Soviet Union and in China who are in favor of old-style Stalinist or Maoist socialist policies. If, on the other hand, one only allows the title "conservative" to be bestowed on those who owe allegiance to this or that premodern tradition (this has been the thrust of recent "paleo-conservative" attacks on "neo-conservatives" in America), then "conservatives" will, at the very least, have to be very suspicious of capitalism and its tradition-shattering dynamism.

There is a broader conservatism (however philosophically or theologically grounded) which does not automatically rally 'round any given status quo, and which is *also* not particularly attached to a tradition rooted in the past. If the key idea of this type of conservatism is to be named, it would probably be pessimism—specifically, pessimism about human nature, about the powers of reason, and about the possibilities of history. Conservatives of this stripe are disinclined to believe human beings capable of great moral improvements over their ancestors. Nor do they think that their contemporaries have a superior ability (whether because of modern science or some more elusive cognitive virtues of "modern man") to reorder human affairs in a rational manner. Both these expressions of skepticism put such conservatives into an adversary stance against two cardinal beliefs of the Enlightenment—the belief in the perfectibility of man and the belief in reason as the instrument of this perfection (the two beliefs together constitute the modern myth of progress). Moreover, these conservatives do not expect some great culmination to occur in history. But neither do they locate some golden age in the past. They are, if you will, a somewhat morose lot—though they console themselves that they are at least clear-eyed.

If one is skeptical about the possibilities of redemptive events in history, one will be cautious about all projects of radical change. Almost instinctively, one will gravitate toward policies of gradual and incremental change. The great revolutions, especially the modern ones, have mostly led to great catastrophes; the humane and moral achievements in history have usually happened more slowly, more quietly, and have often remained unnoticed for considerable periods of time. Minimally, such an approach makes one unsympathetic to any rapid and radical dismantling of traditions. Also, if one is skeptical about the likelihood that rational designs for human life will greatly improve it, then one will tend to respect the accumulated experience and wisdom of generations that are sedimented in traditions. As the Austrian writer Heimito von Doderer very aptly put it, conservatism is the realization that one's old aunts were right after all (*"die alten Tanten hatten doch recht"*). If this type of conservatism is respectful of traditions, it is mostly for empirical reasons; the historical record is littered with horrors perpetrated by the more enthusiastic tradition-bashers. But this generally sympathetic attitude toward tradition is very different from the attitude of someone who believes that a particular tradition represents ultimate truth, divine revelation, or the (alas, lost) high point of human history.

One could make a useful distinction between a historically specific conservatism and one that is historically non-specific. Both usually share some philosophical convictions, such as those just spelled out, and they have this in common against the various embodiments of the myth of progress. But they differ in that one looks back in time to a particular age in which, supposedly, things were better than they are today, while the other has no such historical anchor. This latter type of conservatism was well expressed in Leopold Ranke's famous statement that every age is immediate to God. This is a view (with or without Ranke's religious foundation) that relativizes the past as much as the present. Because of this, the two types of conservatism differ greatly in their attitude toward modernity; this difference will also determine the attitude taken toward capitalism.

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What has here been called a historically specific conservatism will, just about inevitably, be antagonistic toward modernity. Almost by definition, if a better state of affairs is located in the past, modernity must appear as the result of a degenerative process. The character of the degeneration is usually spelled out in great detail—a movement from community to alienation, or from faith to unbelief, or from respect for authority to anarchy, or (most broadly) from health to pathology. Obviously, individual representatives of this kind of conservatism will differ in where they locate the allegedly lost paradise; thus different possibilities in contemporary American conservatism range in time from ancient Athens through medieval Christendom, Puritan New England, the age of High Anglicanism, nineteenth-century Middle America, the Confederacy, to the time just before the New Deal. Such conservatives will also differ in how bad they think the present to be in comparison with the putative past; thus there is a musical scale measuring the pitch of lamentations about modernity. These variations on the theme of decline and fall could be spelled out in much richer detail. Suffice it to say that this view of modernity differs considerably from the one held by conservatives here called historically non-specific.

Such historically unfixated conservatives may agree with any number of criticisms made of modernity. They may agree, for instance, that modernization threatens the sense of community or that it has favored trends toward secularization. But they will balance these negative judgments with the achievements of modernity, from the most elementary, which are demographic (in premodern societies, most children die; in modern societies, most children live), to such distinctively modern notions as the autonomy of the individual or the universality of human rights.

Moreover, they will be skeptical about the alleged virtues of whichever past epoch is selected for the role of Paradise Lost. Take, say, ancient Athens. Leave aside the fact that few Athenians lived beyond their thirties and that, if they did, they were likely to be afflicted with a variety of debilitating physical ailments that would be trivial today. But would one really want to purchase the stipulated wonders of Agora or Academy at the price of mass infanticide, slavery, and almost continuous warfare? Similarly disagreeable questions can be asked about every one of these utopias in the pluperfect mode. Let just one graphic observation be added: Before modern dentistry, most people lost their teeth early, had them rot away, or suffered from perennial toothaches; as an exercise in the philosophy of history, let these dental conditions be imagined in the greatest historical scenes of one's choice . . .

The respective attitudes toward capitalism of the two types of conservatism follow logically, in most cases, from their attitudes toward modernity. The historically specific conservative is very likely going to be hostile toward capitalism or, at best, reluctantly accepting of it as the lesser of the available evils. (An exception to this is the American conservative who locates his better age in the very recent past—an America most easily imagined in the iconography of Norman Rockwell; this America, of course, was capitalist. But while this imagery is much in evidence in the populist right, it has few theoretical expressions.) In this case, as was the case with European conservatives in the past, capitalism may be criticized in terms very similar to those used on the left. And, of course, it is this type of conservatism that some people on the left occasionally fantasize about as a possible partner in an alliance against the capitalist system.

By contrast, there is the other kind of conservatism that may arrive at very different conclusions about capitalism. The reasons for this different attitude should now be spelled out.

The conservatism at issue here leads to a realistic, tough-minded stance in the face of one's own age. One does not glorify it or see it as a step toward some great apotheosis in the future, as the liberal and the radical children of the Enlightenment customarily do. Nor does one pejoratively compare it with an imagined past or with an impossible ideal of perfection. This age, like any other, presents choices. When all is said and done, under modern conditions (that is, conditions determined by huge populations, vastly complex physical agglomerations, a technologized economy, and a centralized state) there are only two realistic options as to how the economy is to be organized—the capitalist and the socialist. To be sure, there are "mixed" cases; indeed, almost all empirical cases are "mixed" to a degree (even Hong Kong experiences some interventions from its political center, and almost all socialist societies have, at the least, an underground market economy). But it is not difficult to decide most of the time whether an economy is *primarily* organized by the market or by a political command system. And in cases where there may be doubt, the trend is usually clearly in one direction or another.

Talk of "third ways" is usually based on illusion. For example, when people talk about the Scandinavian social democracies as constituting a "third way" between capitalism and socialism, they confuse the welfare state with what Marxists aptly call the "mode of production." Thus Sweden has a highly developed welfare state, but its economy has remained (at least to date) a market system. Conversely, a country may have a socialist economy, with only a minimal welfare state or even none at all (say, Albania). Alternatively, people may locate the "third way" in an empirically unavailable future (some Roman Catholic social thinkers have been prone to this temptation), but these visions cannot withstand detailed, empirically concrete questions (e.g., "please describe how prices and wages will be determined in your society").

While there are many theoretical socialisms, what Marxists (rather charmingly) have called "real

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existing socialism" presents an overwhelming empirical fact—that it goes hand in hand, if not with totalitarianism, then with a quantum leap in the power of the state. (Actually, as nearly everyone now admits following the Revolution of 1989 in the former Soviet bloc, the correlation between "real existing socialism" and totalitarianism is high enough since the emergence of the "world's first socialist state" in 1917 that one can minimally say that socialism carries it with a pronounced totalitarian tendency.) There are ideological reasons for this, in the communalistic/collectivistic nostalgias of virtually every socialist doctrine (including, of course, Marxism). But, more basically, there is a simple sociological reason: Socialism means that the state runs the economy, and that necessarily implies an enormous increase in the power of the state. Put simply, the most powerful capitalist conglomerate cannot come close to any socialist state in the scope of its capacity to coerce.

By contrast with socialism, capitalism *leaves room* for the development and continued maintenance of every sort of institution. Included in this free, or relatively free, social space are *traditional institutions*. If nothing else, capitalism allows for the possibility that such institutions will maintain themselves economically. But, because of the limitation on political power that is intrinsic to the market, capitalism is also most likely to bring about political institutions (specifically, democracy and the rule of law) that will protect the right of such institutions to exist.

In sum: *Capitalism means property rights. Tradition happens to be the most cherished property of some people.*

Take a group with an attachment to a particular tradition, one not shared by the majority of the community—say a tradition of living on the land and practicing the worship of a god represented by sauerkraut. In a capitalist society, despite all the "creative destruction" that will undoubtedly intrude on these traditional enclaves, there is a fighting chance that the sauerkrautists will survive. They may create their own agricultural enterprises. In the cities they may create voluntary associations that contribute money to the former enterprises. Individuals who meet discrimination in one place may find refuge in another and make a go of it there economically. And very likely there will be legal recourse and political leverage available to this traditional minority.

In a socialist society, there is unlikely to be "room" for any of this. A collectivized agriculture has no space for a sauerkrautist subculture. There is little if any tolerance, or even economic opportunity, for the multitude of voluntary initiatives that a market economy favors. All employment (or, in a more modified or "mixed" socialism, all really desirable employment) is in the public sector (there either is no private sector or it can offer only very measly jobs); therefore, if there is discrimination in one place, it will very probably be found everywhere. And finally it is much less likely that the sauerkrautists will be able to appeal to a politically independent court or to mobilize political pressure on their own behalf.

Put differently: *Capitalism means pluralism. Tradition has a better chance to survive under pluralism than under an integrative collectivism.*

There are, of course, other reasons why one may morally favor capitalism over its empirically available alternatives (and one does not have to be a conservative of any type to do so): because capitalism is most likely to overcome degrading misery and to lift large masses of people into a decent standard of material life; because capitalism allows for many opportunities to escape poverty and because it provides the means (material as well as institutional) to make poverty less degrading; last not least, because capitalism is empirically linked with democracy, and because human rights (including the right, if one wishes, to worship a sauerkraut divinity and to live by its precepts) are best guaranteed in a democratic regime. All of these are weighty reasons, and a conservative will be very reluctant indeed to risk these empirically demonstrable benefits of capitalism for the mirage of a socialism that may or may not be realized in some dim future. But, most basically, he will opt for capitalism because of the built-in latitudinarianism of the market.

The market allows latitude for every sort of belief or way of life because (once again) money knows neither color nor creed: Your sauerkrautist dollar is as good as my Presbyterian one, and if you can find a market niche for your particular form of *mishugas*, who am I to deny it to you? The logic of the market is tolerant, individuating, open to eccentricity. Socialism, not only in its empirical reality (which is the command economy) but in its very self-proclaimed ideal, is the rule of reason. Such rationalism is inherently intolerant. Error has no rights, and if reason rules, then dissidence is a form of madness. The logic of socialism is integrating, collectivistic, hostile to the "selfishness" of idiosyncratic beliefs and behavior. And here is the decisive paradox: *Capitalism is a thoroughly modern phenomenon, perhaps even the most modern phenomenon of all. But capitalism also relativizes modernity and imposes constraints on the modernization process. And, given a modern world that cannot be wished away, capitalism provides the best chance for non-modern beliefs and institutions to survive in this world.* FT

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When Families Fail

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

Perhaps the most striking feature of our contemporary political landscape is the failure of the tattered labels "liberal" and "conservative" any longer to convey useful distinctions. In my own field of education policy, for example, those who get called conservative are in fact deeply displeased with the status quo and accordingly spend most of their time agitating for revolutionary changes in well-established assumptions and in the rules by which the system operates. By contrast, those commonly termed liberal tend to be reasonably satisfied with the basic arrangements as they have evolved over time and to resist strategies for non-incremental change.

While there are of course exceptions, the same general pattern prevails elsewhere. Within the policy arenas I know best, the central norms of the existing system tend to find their staunchest defenders among people who voted for Carter, Mondale, and Dukakis in the last three presidential elections, while the farthest-reaching proposals for fundamental change are apt to be endorsed by people who voted twice for Reagan and thrice for Bush. This suggests that the old designations no longer convey accurate signals.

Our problem, though, is not just terminological but substantive. In this essay I propose to examine two interrelated questions: "What ought society do when families crumble? What ought government do when children are endangered?" In doing so, I will indicate the ways in which the customary answers to these questions by both "liberals" and "conservatives" will no longer do.

These questions have been on my mind for some time, partly because within my own field we do not have satisfactory answers to them. In education, it has been evident for years that there are really two crises facing the nation, overlapping and yet distinct. One is epitomized in the fact that the average child emerging from the average school—a middle-class youngster, more often than not—has not learned nearly enough. That crisis I think we know how to deal with—even though we haven't dealt well with it yet—and were this an essay on educational policy I would devote the rest of my argument to explaining why our efforts to date have not gotten us very far and what we should be doing differently. But that is an argument for another time.

The second crisis in my field is another matter altogether. It is the plight of what we used to call deprived or disadvantaged children, boys and girls who some call the children of the underclass or, more commonly today, "at-risk" children. I'm talking about kids who are at risk of a great deal more than not learning enough math, science, history, and geography, though that remains part of their problem, too. They are at risk sometimes of life and limb, of body and soul, of spirit and morality, of abandonment and abuse, of drugs and poverty, of neglect and crime and prison. And of reproducing under circumstances that make it likely that their progeny, too, will be at risk in the same ways, only probably worse.

This, clearly, is not just an education crisis, and it is not something that schools alone are capable of handling. We could begin with the most rudimentary facts of all, namely that a youngster reaching his eighteenth birthday has been alive for about 158,000 hours. If he has conscientiously attended school—no absences—for the customary 180 days each year for twelve years at the standard rate of six hours a day, he has spent almost 13,000 hours in school. If we add kindergarten it comes to about 14,000. That is equivalent to saying that the youngster has spent approximately 9 percent of his hours on earth under the school roof. Which implies 91 percent spent elsewhere. Ponder

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what that means in terms of the leverage of the school—the influence of the 9 percent—if most of what is going on during that other 91 percent is at cross purposes to the values, lessons, and actions of the school.

Assume that the 91 percent is not just bland or neutral. Assume it is negative and destructive. Assume that this child lives in poverty, with his mother and siblings but no father on the scene, in a tenement or housing project in a neighborhood infested with crack houses, crime, and random violence, without much in the way of YMCAs or safe parks and supervised recreation opportunities. If you want to make the scenario bleaker, suppose that Mom—a school dropout, perhaps a teenage mother, an unemployed welfare recipient—is also an alcoholic or addict who does not or cannot get up in the morning to dress and feed the youngster and get him properly off to school, much less check to see if he has done his homework. Grimmer still, suppose she was addicted when this child was *in utero*, and that the youngster we see heading for school is part of the first generation of "crack babies" now making their way into kindergarten and first grade, with things all messed up inside their heads in ways we do not yet fully understand, messed up as a consequence of something that happened before they were even born.

Yes, I have been depicting a worst-case scenario. But I am not fantasizing. Consider an article from a while back in the *Washington Times*. The headline read "Storied welfare family is evicted." The article bears quoting at some length.

> Jacqueline Williams, who moved into a sparkling D.C. row house two years ago with her fourteen children and hope for a better future, fled through a back alley yesterday with all she had left: her husband and one child.
>
> The District yesterday condemned the Northeast house as unfit for habitation.
>
> When city officials moved the Williams family from a shelter into the house, it had been newly renovated. But family members virtually destroyed the interior.
>
> An eviction crew hauled away their belongings; the city took away the last of the eleven children now in foster care, and the landlord boarded up the doors.
>
> Mrs. Williams was left homeless again, marking a tragic end to one of the city's most intense efforts to help a poor family get back on its feet. . . . The owner of the house . . . has estimated the damage at $40,000. . . .
>
> Mrs. Williams gained national notoriety in 1987 after Mayor Marion Barry met her and her children in a homeless shelter and said, "Why don't you stop having all those babies?" His remark sparked a national debate about how far government should go to help poor families. The mayor and Mrs. Williams ended up on Phil Donahue's TV show.
>
> Faced with an embarrassing and costly dilemma, the city persuaded [the landlord] to let the Williams family move into the seven-bedroom row house. . . . The city donated furniture and set up social services to help the family.
>
> But Mrs. Williams, who at one time seemed determined to become self-sufficient, began turning away social workers, city officials said. By last summer it was clear that the family was in financial trouble, despite various forms of public assistance. At various times both the water and gas were shut off because of nonpayment. . . .
>
> The city took the first step early this month. It removed eleven of the twelve children who were still living at the house with Mrs. Williams and her husband, Leroy. A court had declared that living conditions were dangerous and ordered the youngsters placed in the care of the city's child protective services agency. . . .

In pondering what to do about situations such as this, it takes no great effort to outline the familiar positions commonly associated with "left" and "right."

From liberals, we usually hear a stern demand for ever more comprehensive public services of various kinds, ranging from income maintenance to prenatal health care to family counselling to early childhood education to drug treatment. These services are to be provided through public agencies by trained and licensed professionals using approved procedures that conform to government regulations. Coordination among service providers is deemed very important. The government making the regulations and the taxpayer footing the bill should be as far up the federal ladder as possible, which is to say national is better than state is better than local. Private agencies may be involved in limited ways, so long as they conform to public standards and procedures. Private funds are welcome only so long as they do not displace public resources. It is best if private funds are used for pilot and demonstration purposes—trip advancers, so to speak, for future journeys by government. To the extent that benefits and services are not universal, eligibility should be determined by a means test. The poorer you are, the more you receive by way of assistance. In no case will any moral judgments be rendered. Your misfortunes, whatever they are, result entirely from forces outside yourself and beyond your control.

The conservative version has certain ritualistic qualities, too. Government should stay out of people's lives as much as possible. If the family is deteriorating, it is at least partly the fault of unwise public policies. Never should such policy reward sloth or foster indolence. Immorality and dependency are apt to result from over-generous social programs, and the more the

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government does with, to, and for children the more it interferes with the abilities of families to look after their own. Families are supreme, and wise policy will help parents to make the important decisions for their own children, including choosing among various providers of diverse services when such are needed. But instead of routinely putting the children under the care and supervision of others, economic strategies—preferably via the tax code rather than handout programs—should strengthen the family's ability to fend for itself, including having a parent stay home to look after young children directly. The alternatives to fending for oneself should be as unattractive as possible. And social policy should carry a fairly heavy load of moralizing, of messages of abstemiousness and self-discipline. Society didn't mess up your life, except perhaps by trying too hard to help. You mostly brought these tribulations upon yourself.

Occasionally these two worldviews converge in awkward and unhappy compromise. The Family Support Act of 1988 was such an amalgam. So, it appears, was the recent federal child care bill. The tension between them is such, however, that even where a statute appears to forge a compromise, the fights continue for years thereafter over each word in the regulations, each request to waive any of the provisions of those regulations, and each year's appropriation.

These are not only struggles among lobbyists and interest groups, not just debates about this program or that project. The visible parts of these icebergs constitute only small fractions of their total mass. Under the surface are huge issues involving our most profound beliefs about human nature, the essential elements of organized society, the nature of our polity, and the shape of our culture.

These are weighty matters. They need periodic reexamination, and there is no reason to suppose that a diverse population of a quarter-billion people is going to agree on all of them.

I do not expect in this essay to resolve these disputes, to forge consensus about the proper role of society with respect to crumbling families, or to craft the optimal policies for government vis-à-vis endangered children. I do, however, want to try out ten precepts that might guide us in the quest for such policies, precepts anchored in my own understanding of human nature, the good society, and the capabilities and frailties of government. I believe them all to be true, but I offer them for discussion in a spirit of rare tentativeness.

First, in this domain it is a mistake to expect to treat everyone alike. The norms of uniformity and universality are out of place here. The crack baby of the slums is simply not the same as the healthy infant of the middle class. The child pedaling his tricycle through a safe and stable neighborhood is not the same as the child trying to fall asleep with gunfire crackling down the block. I disagree completely with experts such as Julia Wrigley, a UCLA sociologist who recently wrote in *Educational Policy* that policies and programs for children should be uniform and universal, blind to differing circumstances. Acceptance of the principle of differentiation, she says, results in lower standards for programs that serve the needy, segregation of children from one another, and stigmatizing of services and the people who receive them.

I respond that any policy or program designed to apply to all fifty million or so American youngsters is going to be unimaginably clumsy, unacceptably costly, and probably ineffectual—far too intrusive for some children's needs, yet not nearly bold enough for others. Jacqueline Williams' children inhabit a very different set of circumstances than do the cardiologist's progeny in McLean. To pretend otherwise does none of them a favor. It is also contrary to common sense, a failing that unsurprisingly often turns out to be fatal for policy proposals.

Yet to agree with me about the need for tailored policies and differentiated programs is to adopt a standard that democratic government often cannot meet. We have hopelessly jumbled our notions of equality, turning a principle of governance into a concept of programmatic entitlement. We can get away with differentiating by income—though even this sometimes has perverse consequences. I am talking about something harder: differentiating according to what, echoing James Coleman, we can call the social capital accumulation in the lives of individual children and families. Because we find this so difficult to do in public policies and government programs, be warned that agreeing with me on this question portends a great deal of private sector involvement of various kinds in society's response to children's varying circumstances.

Second, we must steel ourselves to speak the truth in public places about social norms that we know to be good for children and about the malign consequences of deviating from those norms. This, too, is something government—and those in elective office—find nearly impossible to do. When public officials utter unwelcome truths, we tend to mock them and not to reelect them. For this kind of honesty, we probably need to turn instead to religious authorities, business leaders, educators, columnists, even sports figures and television personalities.

They should, for example, speak what everyone knows to be the truth about families and parenting, politically ticklish though such talk has become. With rare exceptions, two-parent families are good for children, one-parent families are bad, zero-parent families are horrible. This is not esoteric wisdom. It is the product of the species' experience in billions of instances spanning the millennia. Nor is it the only wisdom we have acquired. We know, too, that with rare exceptions, a couple that has children must remain

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a couple if the children are to be well-served. We know that people who are not married—or joined in some other stable fashion—should not have children.

We know that a well-functioning society must condemn behavior that results in people having children who are not prepared to be good parents. I find it astonishing that, in the face of that knowledge, today we seem to attach more opprobrium to dropping out of school, experimenting on a cat, or uttering nasty remarks on campus than we do to giving birth to what, not so many years ago, were called "illegitimate" children. I am making a point about morality, yes, but the larger point is about honesty: Children fare better in some circumstances than others, and no decent society will remain silent when it comes to pointing out which circumstances are which. We do this not because we enjoy sermonizing, but because if we really care about "at-risk" children we need to help people understand—and internalize—the behavioral norms that make for environments in which children thrive.

Third, really a corollary of the second, we need to understand, and to persuade our fellow citizens, that once the "normal" arrangements for child-rearing are ruptured—using "normal" here in the sense of conforming to the norms I have just alluded to—all the alternatives are going to be worse. There are some exceptions, such as the happy adoption that takes a child from bad circumstances into a loving family. Basically, however, we must acknowledge that child-rearing arrangements not based on a decently functioning family are inferior to arrangements that are based on such a family. It's like a heart transplant. You may live for a while, and you may be better off than when your own heart was failing, but you are always worse off than people with healthy hearts who came into the world with them.

To acknowledge this is not enough. We need to teach it, to preach it, to persuade people of it. It is far more important to the society's future than stopping smoking or lowering cholesterol levels or recycling aluminum cans.

Fourth, we are not talking exclusively, or even primarily, about poverty of the sort that is measured in dollars and dealt with by way of income strategies or employment programs. Poverty is certainly present in many cases of deteriorating (or unformed) families and endangered children, but it is seldom the major factor. What we are talking about, above all, is what Senator Daniel P. Moynihan terms "the importance of behavior." In an article published in *The Public Interest* under the title "Toward a Post-Industrial Social Policy," Moynihan has this to say of antipoverty efforts of the past:

> [The effort] was most successful—was hugely successful—where we simply transferred income and services to a stable, settled group like the elderly. It had little success—if you like, it failed—where poverty stemmed from social behavior. Indeed, it could not have succeeded there because of a massive denial that a problem really existed.
> . . .
>
> It is obvious that American society rewards traditional family patterns, and punishes those that in the past would have been called deviant. What is less obvious is why this fact is so obscure to so many. The disjunction between our norms and our behavior is dysfunctional in the extreme.

But the problem is not just family structure. "Substance abuse," Moynihan points out, "is equally dysfunctional." We could say the same of gang warfare, mass attacks on innocent joggers and cyclists, and the proliferation of automatic weapons in city streets. These examples of antisocial behavior all bespeak impoverishment more of the soul than the pocketbook, desolation of the value structure of civil and free society, erosion around the edges of the singular characteristics that we have in mind when we call ourselves "human."

Fifth, economic measures may deal with dollar poverty, but economic incentives cannot be counted upon to alter antisocial behavior. Income transfer programs will not win any new war on what we may term "behavioral poverty." "A tough-minded approach to post-industrial social issues," Moynihan concludes his essay, "may lead to the coming of age of American social policy."

Here, it seems to me, is where many conservative commentators on "family policy" sometimes verge on naive utopianism. I do not see expansions of the earned income tax credit, or whatever, making people significantly less apt to shoot one another with assault rifles. We also have evidence that economic welfare strategies can induce unfortunate consequences. Let me note two of the "laws of social programs" from Charles Murray's seminal book, *Losing Ground*: the "law of unintended rewards" holds that "any social transfer increases the net value of being in the condition that prompted the transfer"; and the "law of net harm" asserts that "the less likely it is that the unwanted behavior will change voluntarily, the more likely it is that a program to induce change will cause net harm."

My main point here, however, is simply that we cannot count on conventional welfare-type programs grounded in an economic conception of poverty to set matters right when the matters in question are essentially behavioral. Hence I believe we need to promulgate—and then enforce—a *doctrine of accountability* for parents as well as for their children.

We are accustomed to talking about accountability for schools and other providers of public services. I suggest that we need to devise systems of private accountability as well. It is important to emphasize that any real accountability system includes conse-

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quences—both the happy, welcome kind and the other kind. Accountability is rarely welcomed by those unaccustomed to it. We have to be ready to impose real, material sanctions on adults when they *or their children* deviate from behavioral norms.

We should not, of course, be stupid about the matter. There are only a few situations, for example, in which a child is well-served by having his parent clapped in jail. But the principle of "parent liability" must include the willingness of the larger society to inconvenience people in ways they do not welcome. In Wisconsin, welfare benefits for the parent are slashed when the child is truant from school. The California penal code allows prosecutors to seek fines from parents who fail to exercise "reasonable care, supervision, protection, and control over their minor child." A local ordinance in Arkansas also provides for a fine of up to $500 (and jail for up to thirty days) for parents whose children violate the town's curfew. A Michigan judge recently ordered a woman accused of smoking crack while pregnant to be tried on child abuse and drug delivery charges. The Colorado legislature is considering a bill to make the parents of juvenile delinquents responsible for their treatment and detention costs.

The American Civil Liberties Union does not like such measures. Most faculty members in social work schools deplore them. And we should not look for applause from those affected by them. I am not here going to evaluate the merit of individual measures of this kind. I merely assert that the doctrine of parental accountability for their own and their children's behavior means that we must be prepared to think along these lines.

Sixth, we should embrace as a guiding principle of social policy Urie Bronfenbrenner's proposition that "In order to develop, a child needs the enduring, irrational involvement of one or more adults in care and joint activity with the child." When asked to restate what he meant by "irrational involvement," he said, "Somebody has got to be crazy about that kid!"

This I think we all know to be true. But do we also understand that public policy cannot vouchsafe love? The most it usually can do is to see that the corporeal and cognitive needs of the child are met. Seldom can government fill spiritual and emotional voids. Once in a while, it can create conditions in which something good happens. But we dare not count on it.

Seventh, if government cannot furnish a suitable shepherd for the lamb, we must ask ourselves through what other mechanisms society might do so. Our social policy should not be equated with our public policy. As we look beyond government, we turn—in addition to extended families, kindly neighbors, and individual benefactors—to what have been termed mediating structures, voluntary associations, little platoons, "points of light." We have a great many of them in this country, and that is one of our abiding societal strengths. But they haven't always had a happy marriage to our public norms. We get skittish when these other providers of services have religious ties, for example, when they give priority to people of their own race, ethnic group, or creed, when they impose entrance requirements or fees or make people wear uniforms or spell out moral codes. We tease people for being "Boy Scouts" even though the scout virtues—loyalty, obedience, trustworthiness, etc.—are reasonable facsimiles of the kind of behavior we need many more people to manifest. We also worry about unevenness in the services such organizations render and inconsistency in the treatments they provide.

But let me say it again: If we are serious about finding shepherds to deal with the moral, behavioral, spiritual, and emotional dimensions of all our children, we cannot limit ourselves to government. And we cannot confine ourselves within the boundaries of what is conventionally thought reasonable for public employees to do. It is no coincidence that when a group of businesses opened a free private school in Chicago designed to be a model for effective education of disadvantaged children, one of the first decisions they and the new principal made was that teachers in the school would routinely make home visits. The *Washington Post* recently reported on an elementary school in Prince William County, Virginia, where an eighth-grade teacher concluded that some of her students needed a strong black male role model and proceeded to bring her own husband to school—and not just once—to work with them. This, I dare say, is not covered in the union contract for teachers in that school system. The teacher received no additional compensation for doing it. But it was a wonderful thing to do.

Eighth, while it is usually best to improve the situation within a child's own family, to buttress his natural parents in whatever ways we can, from parent-education programs to church-basement support groups to job-training programs, I believe we are going to have to be prepared more frequently to remove children from their homes and send them into other settings where, in Bronfenbrenner's phrase, someone will be crazy about them. When a family is in a condition of meltdown, our priority must be to help the children. Parents do not always know best, and their interest is not always foremost. Here I disagree with many conservatives. But where I quarrel with many liberals is that I have little faith in temporary, "foster care" situations, where the child stays for a time until—it is hoped—his family gets straightened out. Too many foster situations turn out to be unsatisfactory for too many children. Adoption is in many cases to be preferred. And so are the terrific residential schools and orphanages such as Boys Town in Nebraska, or the Milton S. Hershey School and the Glen

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Mills Schools in Pennsylvania.

I'm not talking Dickensian conditions. I'm talking about environments that, whether one is looking at physical safety, moral climate, the presence of admirable and caring adults, or the effectiveness of the education and training offered, are vastly more salubrious than those in the child's own home, school, and neighborhood. At the Hershey school, it may be noted, most of the 1,150 youngsters in residence are not real orphans. They have at least one living parent. They are, in the phrase of a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who recently profiled the school, the "products of a different sort of calamity." Their parents cannot or will not take decent care of them.

No, I do not want to let parents off the hook. Yes, part of me rebels at taking children away from their parents—or letting parents transfer their child-rearing responsibilities to the paid staff of schools like this. Such schools are very expensive, too, in the neighborhood of $30,000 per child per year. But, remember, we need someone to "be crazy about" those boys and girls.

Ninth, as one of our foremost policy objectives, we should be devising means to generate and accumulate what Professor Coleman has termed "social capital" everywhere it is in short supply. This means, above all, building it up within the family and between parent and child. Coleman has spelled out what he means by social capital in a recent paper:

> While physical or financial capital exists wholly in tangible resources, and human capital is a property of individual persons, social capital exists in the relations between persons.
>
> Social capital can be of several sorts, serving different purposes. If a child trusts an adult, whether a parent or a member of the community, and the adult is trustworthy, this relation is a resource on which the child can draw when in difficulties. . . . If the relations in a community are strong enough to establish norms about the behavior of children and youth and to impose effective sanctions toward their observance, this constitutes a resource for children, protecting them from the predations of peers, and a resource for parents to aid in shaping the habits of their children. These are two forms of social capital; more generally, social capital held by a person lies in the strength of social relations that make available to the person the resources of others.

How can social capital be generated where it does not naturally occur? That ought to be one of our premier policy questions of the 1990s. Coleman himself offers some clues. He suggests, for example, a series of steps that schools can take to help parents learn better how to help their children in the pursuit of education, and a set of actions that parents in a neighborhood or even a workplace can take in collaboration with each other to increase the net social capital available to their children. I will not here specify his program but simply make the point: We have purposeful policy strategies for boosting investment capital and human capital. We need the same for social capital.

Tenth, and finally, we need to treat these matters as we would a national defense crisis, not just as matters that vex individuals. We are dealing with threats to the commonweal, to the society itself. When significant numbers of five-year olds enter school with their brains messed up, when law-abiding people fear walking down the street at night, when youngsters may be struck down by random gunfire outside their homes or in the school's playground, and when packs of marauding teenagers go "wilding" in the park, it is no exaggeration to say we are facing a national emergency, different in kind, perhaps, but not in degree from threats posed by hostile nations. If, in the words of the National Commission on Excellence in Education as long ago as 1983, an unfriendly foreign power had done all this to us, we would have deemed it an act of war.

We should, therefore, think about mobilizing to deal with the situation as we would a major menace to our national defense. We should expect to submit ourselves to the organizational arrangements, the long-term resolve, the bold changes in familiar assumptions, practices, conveniences, and perhaps the inhibitions that we associate with answering grave threats to the nation's well-being. It is not my purpose to be melodramatic or to advocate some sort of police state. It is to say that if we have any serious expectation of winning this new war on behavioral poverty, we are going to need not only the imagination to devise strategies suited to victory but also the resolve to see them through. FI

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A Jewish Theological Understanding of Christianity in Our Time

David Novak

It was in the early 1960s that my late revered teacher, Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel, became the first major Jewish theologian in America to enter into dialogue with Christian theologians on a high theological level. Once during that time, when I was part of a small group of students who regularly met with him in a seminar in Jewish theology, he openly wondered, and invited us to wonder with him, what the history of Judaism would have become if the vast majority of the Jewish people had begun to move eastward to Asia rather than westward to Europe after the destruction of the Second Temple in the first century of the Common Era. What, he mused, would have become of Judaism if the center of Jewry had taken root in India or China, for example, rather than in Spain and the Rhineland? What would have become of Judaism in civilizations whose character was shaped by religions such as Hinduism or Buddhism, which themselves had no original connection with Judaism at all?

Put another way, the question is: What would have become of Judaism if the historical connection with Christianity had ceased shortly after the birth of the new Christian religion, if the mother religion and the daughter religion had ceased to live in proximity and to share any continuing history? Would Judaism and the Jewish people have fared better or worse if they had not found themselves for the most part living in a civilization dominated by the Christian religion, which has claimed from the beginning to be the direct descendant and fulfillment of Judaism and the life of the Jewish people? (A similar set of questions could be asked, *mutatis mutandis*, about Jewish involvement with Islam, a religion that also claims, although to a much lesser extent than Christianity, descent from Judaism.)

Since my teacher raised this question to us at the very time that he was engaged in intense dialogue with the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church as they were preparing for Vatican Council II, I did not take it to be one of idle historical speculation. Rather, I have always taken his question to suggest that only the most rigorous theological approach will be equal to the challenge of understanding what has undoubtedly been the most complex interreligious relationship in human history. "According to the effort, so is the reward," the ancient rabbis taught. In my own theological wrestling as a Jew with Judaism's relationship with Christianity, I have tried not to forget Heschel's example. To me its lesson has been: Be cautious but hopeful.

Because Judaism and Christianity have been in such constant historical contact, theological analysis of that relationship must begin to reconstruct its complex past. Yet the present situation and its future projections must first be constituted if the past is not just to be

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included in theological reflection but to subsume it. Theological reflection takes place within history, but the history within which it takes place is an ongoing, open-ended process. The present and its future extensions must call upon the past for resources without ever assuming that the answers sought are already there intact.

In this particular theological reflection I intend to concentrate first on the nature of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity during much of the *premodern* period of the parallel history of the two communities. I will next focus on what the relationship has been for much of the *modern* period. Finally, I will look at what I think the relationship *might be* into at least the immediate future of what is widely understood as our *postmodern* world. This final concentration is not an act of futuristic speculation. Rather, it is an act of moral judgment. It is the responsibility I consider Jews and Christians now to have if they are committed to the continuing deepening and improvement of their mutual relationship, a deepening and improvement that has already been made manifest to some Jews and some Christians in recent years.

I

The theological contacts between Jews and Christians during much of the premodern period are best characterized as disputations. Even when not engaged in face-to-face argumentation, Jews and Christians spoke about each other in essentially disputational terms. Disputational thinking took two forms: one that might be called rejectionist; the other that might be called accommodationist.

In rejectionist-type disputation, each religion regarded the other as something to be totally delegitimized.

For Christians, as is well known, this meant that the Jews were in fact impostors, people claiming still to be the elect nation of God, Israel, when in truth the Church had superseded the Jews in that role. The very existence of the Jewish people as a religious community separate from Christianity was regarded as a fundamental affront to the new religious community with whom God had now made his permanent covenant. The legitimacy of the Jews *qua* Jews was something that belonged only to history. It was the nature of the affront that those properly relegated to the past were insisting on being present and extending themselves into the future, all the while denying the Christian view of both present (*kairos*) and future (*parousia*). The social, economic, political, and legal ramifications of this rejectionist view of Jews and Judaism were enormous, considering that so much of premodern Western civilization was indeed *Christendom*, where Christians held political power and justified their power in Christian terms.

Because Jews did not wield power over Christians, Jewish rejectionism as regards Christianity did not find political expression. Nevertheless, that rejectionism certainly existed (and still does exist in some Jewish circles), and it influenced Jewish attitudes toward Christians and Christianity from the beginning. The sources upon which this Jewish rejectionism drew bear close examination because they admit of more than one interpretation and more than one application.

We can begin with the rejectionist charge of idolatry. It can be well demonstrated that, as far as Jewish biblical teaching goes, idolatry is proscribed only for Jews. Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is there any explicit prohibition of idolatry for gentiles. This distinction appears to be based on the fact that idolatry is a sin only subsequent to Israel's becoming covenanted with God. The essence of the biblical prohibition of idolatry is "You shall have no other gods in My presence" (Exodus 20:3). In biblical teaching, God's omnipresence is not something inferred from the experience of nature. Rather, it is something declared by revelation. Once God has appeared to his people and covenanted with them, no other god is *thereafter* acceptable *for them*. That is why idolatry is so often compared to adultery. Adultery can only occur in the context of a marriage. So (in this view anyway) with idolatry: there is only a sin after Israel is in the covenant. Those outside the covenant lack the very precondition for culpability for the sin of idolatry. Only Israel can be guilty of it. And although the Bible recognizes the existence of individual non-Jewish monotheists, they are regarded in one way or another as "invisible" extensions of the covenanted people of Israel. On the level of peoples, monotheistic Israel (at least in principle) was on one side and all the polytheistic gentile nations were on the other. "Our God is in heaven, doing whatever he wants; but their idols are silver and gold, the works of human hands" (Psalms 115:3-4). The idea of a monotheistic community of gentiles was simply inconceivable.

In the rabbinic period, beginning just before the onset of the Common Era, this neat division between Jews and gentiles radically changed. During this period there emerged the doctrine of the Noahide laws, which are seven categories of commandments considered binding on all humankind (i.e., the descendants of Noah after the Flood). While various disputes occurred among the rabbis about the precise nature of these laws, and even whether they are more or less than seven in number, in every version of them the prohibition of idolatry for gentiles is prominently featured. The proscription of idolatry is no longer a corollary of the covenant with Israel. Rather, it both antedates it (the Noahide laws predate the Sinaitic laws) and it reaches beyond it (humankind extends farther than the boundaries of Israel). This doctrine radically changed the way Jews looked at the non-Jewish world. Whereas in the biblical view the non-Jewish world was regarded as one idolatrous monolith,

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varying only in terms of the moral quality of their ethical practices, in the rabbinic view the non-Jewish world was now rent in two: one part idolatrous; the other part monotheistic.

The doctrine of Noahide law, in particular the doctrine of the universal prohibition of idolatry, gave Jewish thinkers the criterion they needed to judge the two religions among whose adherents they had to live from late antiquity on: Christianity and Islam. Generally, Islam, because of its strict monotheism and its absolute prohibition of images, received a more positive judgment than did Christianity, with its trinitarianism and its use of images even in connection with worship. Because of this, in a number of areas of Jewish law that govern contacts between Jews and non-Jews, Muslims were judged more favorably than Christians. At this level, then, the Jewish rejection of Christianity was every bit as harsh as the Christian rejection of Judaism.

Whether, given the opportunity, this harsh Jewish judgment of Christianity would have translated itself into the same congeries of restrictions that Christians in fact imposed on Jews is, like all historical speculation, unanswerable. One certainly cannot say it would have been impossible. It is worth mentioning this in light of the tendency of some well-meaning Christians, sincerely committed to improving the Christian relationship with Judaism, to assume that all malevolent obstacles to that improvement come from the Christian side and that from the Jewish side flows only benevolence. Christian malevolence, to be sure, had more of an opportunity to assert itself in history than did Jewish malevolence. But the purposes of theological dialogue are much better served by the assumption of two active and responsible partners than of one who is active (and guilt-ridden) and the other passive (and self-righteous).

It is fortunate for those committed to the improvement of the Jewish-Christian relationship that the rejectionist interpretation of the classical Jewish sources as they apply to Christianity is not the only option available. In the later Middle Ages, there emerged in the Jewish community a more positive view of Christianity, one that could be termed accommodationist. In this view, Christianity is not judged to be idolatrous. The reasons for this new judgment were basically two—one strictly theological, the other more juridical.

On the theological level, it was now assumed that despite Christian worship of the Trinity, the ultimate object of Christian worship and allegiance is the God who is creator of heaven and earth. In other words, Christians and Jews are really bound to the same God, albeit in different ways. The difference between Judaism and Christianity, in the rejectionist view a difference in kind, is in the accommodationist view one of degree. In the latter view, the difference between Jews and Christians is that Jews *in* the covenant have a direct, unmediated relationship with God, whereas Christians *through* Jesus have an indirect, mediated relationship with this same God. Moreover, the Northern European Jewish thinkers who advocated this view (unlike their contemporary counterparts in Spain) were in no wise adherents of Aristotelian philosophy and its natural theology, which argued that God's existence could be demonstrated outside of historical revelation. That being the case, it can only be assumed that they extended this theological approval of Christianity on the grounds that Christianity accepted the creator God as he has revealed himself in the Hebrew Bible.

On the juridical level, it was now recognized by many Jewish thinkers that Christianity had explicitly accepted the moral teaching of the Hebrew Bible as normative. And, unlike Islam, it accepted that source of its moral teaching precisely because it is God's revelation to his people Israel, and it is as Israel has preserved it in Scripture. Thus, Christianity was now regarded by many—though by no means all—Jewish thinkers as a lesser version of Judaism for gentiles.

This type of accommodationist theology is still very much part of the thinking of those traditional Jews who have a generally positive view of Christianity as a gentile religion. Indeed, the basic logic of this position has easily recognizable analogues in that Christian thinking about Jews that maintains a generally positive view of Judaism. For the accommodationist, the body of Israel (or the body of the Church) extends, in a descending sense to be sure, beyond the range of its literal adherents.

For all the attractiveness of this accommodationist approach—certainly when contrasted with its rejectionist alternative—it is still inadequate on both historical and philosophical grounds.

On historical grounds, it is inadequate because it takes what is essentially a late medieval view and catapults it into contemporary discussion, in effect ignoring the intervening critique of modernity. But modernity must be first understood and then overcome if the Jewish-Christian relationship is to establish firm contemporary grounding; it cannot simply be skirted.

On philosophical grounds, this form of accommodationism is inadequate for purposes of dialogue because its portrayal of the other faith (whether by Jews of Christianity or by Christians of Judaism) is one that the other faith—in good faith—cannot possibly accept about itself. There can be no true dialogue when each side is relating to a phantom of its own projection, however benevolent that projection might be, rather than to a view of the other side that the other side can truly accept about itself.

Christians cannot be genuinely faithful to their covenantal commitment by regarding themselves as essentially Jewish derivatives. And Jews cannot remain genuinely faithful to their covenantal commitment by regarding themselves as essentially proto-

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Christians. The view of accommodationism is one that is only theological, taking theology in the strictest sense, namely, without the incorporation of philosophical and historical perspectives. And it is cogent in precisely those areas where there is no real interrelationship between Jews and Christians and where there neither can nor should be one. At this interior theological level, what might be termed the sacramental life of each respective community, each community must regard its own truth as superior to all others. At best, these other truths can only be regarded as fragmentary versions of it in some way or another.

Nevertheless, although this interior level is where the heart of each religious community must be recognized and guarded, it is not wholly sufficient for the full life of that community in the world. This was less apparent before the Enlightenment than it has been since. Before the Enlightenment, religious communities could live in far greater isolation than they could in its aftermath. The growing interaction between religious communities in the post-Enlightenment world requires all of them to engage in self-critical reflection, which in order to be fully theologically informed must extend beyond theology proper into the areas of philosophy and history.

II

The coming of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, with its subsequent political emancipation of the Jews in Western Europe, radically changed the context of all social and cultural relationships. The relationship between Jews and Christians can be seen as a prime example of that radical historical change.

Until that time, the relationship between Jews and Christians, viewed from either side, was one whose ultimate meaning could be located only within the overall covenantal relationship between God and his people. The relationship between God and his people was always the one having absolute primacy, the one that had basically to determine all human relationships, whether those within the covenanted community itself or those between the covenanted community and the outside world. With the Enlightenment, all that changed within Western European (and, by extension, American) culture.

Where God had been the measure of all things, man now occupied that central role. The Enlightenment emphasis was on the primacy of man as a rationally autonomous ethical being, fully capable of constructing a meaningful world for himself. In this view, every human being is to be considered as an end-in-itself, as Kant most famously put it. The structure of all human relationships is to be philosophically worked up from that intuition.

Under the new dispensation, theology had to justify itself ethically by means of various forms of philosophical argumentation. The relationship between God and man, with which theology (Jewish or Christian) is primarily concerned, could now only be postulated if it contributed to the elaboration of ethical theory. Moreover, the only divine-human relationship that this new anthropocentrism would tolerate was between a postulated deity and the human individual. As for the more historically grounded covenantal relationships between God and peoples, the only role left for them and the patterns of ritualized culture they had produced was that there be selected from among them those practices that could be justified as contributing to the overall functioning of the ethically autonomous individual.

It was now widely assumed that complications of theology, whether with regard to Protestant-Catholic relations or to Christian-Jewish relations, needed to be bracketed, if not set aside altogether. For Christians and Jews, acceptance of the Enlightenment project could be seen as that which enabled them to relate to one another in the foreground as ahistorical individuals while relegating to the background historical baggage they still carried with them as members of covenanted communities. Secularism now offered what seemed to many Christians—and to even more Jews—a simple solution to what had been a complex and tortured situation, one entailing much intolerance and suffering. John Courtney Murray wrote sympathetically of the attraction of secularism for many modern Jews:

> There is the ancient resentment of the Jew, who has for centuries been dependent for his existence on the good will, often not forthcoming, of a Christian community. Now in America, where he has acquired social power, his distrust of the Christian community leads him to align himself with the secularizing forces whose dominance, he thinks, will afford him a security he has never known.

III

But modernity has problems of its own. The inadequacy of the modern, secularist alternative to medieval disputationism (whether of the rejectionist or accommodationist type) is that it assumes that humans can transcend their traditions and simply reconstitute themselves in an ahistorical realm, one whose simplicity and transparent rationality will overcome the complexities of the past.

But as Alasdair MacIntyre has recently argued, this Enlightenment project is a failure by its own criterion of the transcendence of historical limitations. MacIntyre (along with others) has shown that the Enlightenment itself is as much a product of its own particular culture as that which it proclaimed to have successfully overcome. If all thinking, then, is conducted within the context of a cultural tradition, it would seem to be done more consistently and more fruitfully when

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it is explicit about its own contextual limitations and does not pretend to be what it is not and cannot be. This historical contextualization has even been shown, as in the work of Thomas Kuhn, to be applicable to the thinking of the natural sciences.

If the notion of the transcendence of history will not work in thinking about the natural sciences, how much more vulnerable is it in thinking about something like the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, where historical considerations must always be kept in play? Jews and Christians in the postmodern era can establish an authentic relationship only when they attempt to discover where their respective traditions overlap, where they form a common border before the world. No such authentic relationship can arise out of the positing of some new neutral position that will allow both sides to transcend restrictive and commonly resented traditions.

At this stage of history, Jews should realize that the Enlightenment project took much more from them than it gave. The Enlightenment project asked Jews to divest themselves of everything that made them unique and to become part of a new social order where a similar divestment was to be made by everyone else as well. The fact was, however, that these "others," namely the Christian majority, were not required to do anything so radical. They were merely required to translate their tradition into terms that could be taken in a more rational and a more anthropocentric sense than previously. But at the end of the day, virtually all of the traditional Christian symbols remained intact, however much they might be recontextualized. From the fact of this unequal demand, it was clear that under Enlightenment terms Jewish-Christian mutuality was essentially illusionary.

The illusion was not cost-free. Secularized Jews, having already divested themselves of just about everything that made them singularly Jewish, puzzled over the failure of Christians to do the same. When these secularized Jews became impatient with what they took to be Christian recalcitrance in this secularizing project, when they demanded that it be speeded up, many Christians turned resentful. Jews came to be seen as the enemies of Christian tradition, indeed of all tradition. This negative impression was not helped by the fact that, for the most part, those Jews most conspicuous in the politics of secular society were those least Jewish in terms of their religious commitment. Meanwhile, the vast majority of religiously committed Jews tried to remain as inconspicuous as possible, carefully guarding the ethnic isolation that a secularized and secularizing society has been willing, at least to date, to humor as the product of a quaint tribal enclave.

IV

Today, when the pretensions of the whole Enlightenment project are becoming ever more apparent, those Jews and Christians who still believe that their respective religious traditions can speak to them and to the world beyond them have an important opportunity to speak to each other in a new way. If thoughtful members of both communities become adequately aware of the moment they now occupy in history, and are prepared to reexamine their respective traditions for the resources there to be developed, then the Jewish-Christian relationship has a significant chance of becoming something more enriching than it has ever been before. Here is where the theological challenge lies, understanding "theology" now in its wider rather than its stricter sense.

The pretensions of the Enlightenment project have been nowhere more apparent than in the very area where it claimed to have staked out fundamental new ground: ethics. The notion of the human individual as a rational, self-legislating being has been challenged as an affront to the human connection both with history and with nature. In either case, the connection is violated when the essence of humanness is posited to be *homo faber*, man as self-sufficient creator.

On the historical level, it has been shown that ethics primarily functions as the norm for humans-in-community. The voluntary associations of human beings characterized by contractual arrangements (as in the "social contract" so persistently advocated by Enlightenment thinkers from John Locke in the seventeenth century to John Rawls today) are clearly subsequent to and dependent on the anterior ways humans are related to each other through communal bonds. These bonds are prior to human invention and stipulation.

For this reason, much of traditional ethics has been concerned with familial relationships. This reality is one to which the Enlightenment is simply unprepared to address itself because it fits neither within the domain of the individual, at the one end of the ethical spectrum, or within that of the state at the other. These are the only two domains which the Enlightenment can recognize and constitute. In our age, when there is so much confusion over issues of ethics that are family issues in one way or another, the Enlightenment and its adherents have little to say. In the Enlightenment view of the world, ethical issues regularly get reduced to issues of civil liberties, which is increasingly being shown to be a far too simplistic category to guide society in dealing with such complex moral problems as incest, abortion, divorce, and substance abuse.

Although new challenges in this area call for fresh thinking on the part of all members of society, Jews and Christians are better prepared than most to deal with them, at least insofar as they have not severed their links with tradition. Since the family is the prime unit in the transmission of tradition (indeed, tradition itself has little meaning for those uprooted from family), it stands to reason that the grave familial problems our society faces can be effectively approached only within the context of tradition.

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On the level of nature, it is becoming ever more evident that the pretensions of *homo faber* as the essential definition of humanness are the prime source of the worsening ecological crisis we face. We suffer from technological programs based on the assumption that the earth is an infinite resource at our disposal, something that belongs to us and is to be used for whatever project we happen to be creating in our own image. It is not just that we need a more intelligent technology, one more sensitive to the long-range effects of our own projects than has been the case heretofore. Rather, technology itself is now the issue in the sense that we are being required to rethink our mutual relationship with our fellow inhabitants of the earth, both human and nonhuman, and with what lies beyond the surface of this planet. This latter point is most immediately impressed upon us of late by issues pertaining to the atmosphere and extraterrestrial projection.

Here again, without arguing a fundamentalist claim to have a ready-made answer for every question that might arise, Jews and Christians are in an advantageous position to face grave issues in relation to nature because they have been nurtured by the doctrine of creation. That doctrine has taught us that not only are we humans not the works of our own hands—"he made us and not we ourselves" (Psalms 100:3)—but that the earth itself "is given to humankind" (Psalms 115:16) not for its own disposal but only "to work for it and care for it" (Genesis 2:15). The exalted place of man and woman in the order of creation, precisely because it is not of their own making but a ministry to which they are appointed, is what makes the commandment to them to be responsible for the rest of earthly creation intelligible. Thus Jews and Christians, both informed by what they have learned about the integrity of creation from the Hebrew Bible, need not try to invent ecological ethics *de novo*. Indeed, that project itself is trapped in a paradox: How does one *invent* a criterion for containing *invention*? Rather, Jews and Christians have a resource for developing approaches to ecology that respect both the integrity of creation and the integrity of the unique human creature therein, one who is in some ways part of it and in some ways is not.

The question, then, is how can Jews and Christians bring these considerable resources to the world at large.

The first point is that neither Jews nor Christians can do it alone, not at least in a society like ours. For in America today, the usual secularist reaction in dealing with any message brought to society by a particular community is automatically to assume that the message is from a "special interest group," one whose motives are those of self-interest, even when hidden behind a rhetoric of altruism. In this view, the task of secular society is to balance the message of any one community against those of other communities and to try to work up some sort of consensus among all of them. And if the secularists doing the balancing are old-fashioned Enlightenment rationalists, the development of this consensus will become one where the rights of the individual remain the ultimate criterion for judging the often conflicting claims of various particular communities.

Jews and Christians in our society have all too readily fallen into this secularist trap and been naively willing to constitute their message to the world under the rubric of special interest. They have reasoned that such an adjustment is necessary to their survival—or at least their effectiveness—in a secular world. But by so doing, Jews and Christians have lost sight of who they are and what their message to the world really is. For the true claims of Jews and Christians are based on the doctrine of revelation, which means that they are essentially the recipients of a message about the world, one given to them from the only source who can see the world from the perspective of transcendence—*sub specie divinitatis*. They claim to be recipients of the word of God, the God who created the world and who promises to redeem it.

When, however, such a message is proclaimed exclusively by one community, especially one making triumphalistic claims about itself whose net effect is to delegitimize all other communal claims, the public credibility of the message becomes highly suspect. For the claims of the community for itself seem more emphatic than the message proclaimed to and for the world, and so appear to be just another case of special pleading by yet another special interest group in society. By setting itself up to be so categorized and characterized, any religious community negates the very intent of its message.

When, on the other hand, Jews and Christians discover their common border that faces onto the world and devise means for the joint proclamation of certain truths they hold in common, the public credibility of their message increases enormously. It increases most of all because the animosity which, unfortunately but truly, characterized so much of their relationship throughout history is now seen to be overcome by the two communities themselves. It has been the secularist assumption that the only way to overcome interreligious animosity is essentially to remove religion from public influence altogether. However, the religious communities themselves are beginning to accomplish for themselves and for the world what secularism could not do because it demanded what is culturally impossible. When Jews and Christians have something in common to say to the world, especially when that message is not one that simply promotes some issue of immediate benefit to the communities themselves, secularist stereotypes about the necessarily antagonistic character of religious public discourse fall by the wayside. Moreover, it stands to reason that if something is true for the world at large, that truth should surely have been discovered by more than one community

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in isolation.

This joint proclamation of certain truths about the nature of the human person and human community as created historical realities cannot be accomplished, however, in a didactic way. It cannot be done in a way that basically says to the world, We already have the truth, and you must now accept it from us. Such a method of relating to the moral issues of the world cannot suffice for two reasons.

In the first place, Judaism and Christianity do not operate from the same basis of authority. In both communities, it is not the unmediated voice from Scripture that is in itself normative, but rather it is the voice of Scripture as interpreted by the traditional community and its structure of authority. At this level, Judaism and Christianity cannot speak with the same voice; they cannot and dare not jointly proclaim "thus saith the Lord." The word of God for each community is materially inseparable from the communal medium that proclaims it. Christians cannot in good faith look to Jewish authorities for the normative meaning of the word of God any more than Jews can in good faith look for it to Christian authorities. The only way this could be accomplished without total surrender of one religious community to the other would be through some sort of syncretism, and the dominant authorities of both traditions have been rightly suspicious of any such syncretism and have carefully proscribed those practices that seem to express it. They have been properly suspicious of syncretizing tendencies because those tendencies imply that human creation can ultimately overcome what God has originally ordained and revealed.

The way that Judaism and Christianity can jointly proclaim certain normative truths about the human condition without lapsing into the surrender demanded by proselytism, syncretism, or secularism is to affirm what Jewish tradition and Christian tradition have taught about general revelation. General revelation is historically antecedent to the special revelation that each community respectively claims as its own basic norm. Moreover, it still functions even after that special revelation has occurred. For Jews, this is the affirmation of the revelation to the children of Noah as being something that extends beyond the revelation to the children of Israel at Sinai. For Roman Catholics and some Anglicans, this is the affirmation of natural law as something that extends beyond the divine law. For some Protestants, surely for many from Lutheran or Reformed backgrounds, this is the affirmation of the orders of creation as something that extends beyond the Gospel.

In all these traditions, it needs to be added, what is "beyond" is certainly not what is "higher" on any scale of value. Quite the contrary, what is more general is lower on that scale of value, a point that Jews who affirm the divine election of Israel and Christians who affirm the Incarnation can readily understand. Nevertheless, what is more general and lower on that scale of value is not therefore without any value at all.

This general revelation, which makes itself manifest in certain universal moral principles, is one that is most immediately accessible to human reason. It does not require a covenantal experience wherefrom the religious community proclaims it to the world. It can be discovered within ordinary human experience. It must be seen from within that experience as encompassing those conditions necessary for authentic human community to be sustained. Yet the religious communities do not in affirming these moral principles dissolve into some general human community. For they must insist all along that these principles are only *necessary* for authentic human community. They are not in themselves *sufficient* for authentic human fulfillment. That can only be appropriated through revelation and consummated by salvation: the ultimate redemption of the world by its creator God.

Although the religious communities of Judaism and Christianity cannot legislate this minimal human morality (indeed, when they attempt to do so they most often retard its social impact, especially in a democratic setting), they can provide it with an overall ontological context, a continuing vision of its original grounds and its ultimate horizon. Without that continuing vision, the very operation of human moral reason, indeed all human reason itself, flounders. Reason cannot flourish for long in an ontological vacuum, that is, in an otherwise absurd universe and in an otherwise aimless trajectory of human history.

The constitution of the relation between God's revealed law and universal moral law is an intellectual operation that will be conducted differently not only by the respective religious communities themselves, but by adherents of particular theological and philosophical tendencies within those communities. Nevertheless, the recognition of the similarity of the problematic, coming as it does out of that which both communities accept as Sacred Scripture—the Hebrew Bible—can lead to a new mutuality. This new mutuality is one that allows each community to maintain its own faith integrity in relationship with God, with the members of its own covenant, with the members of the most proximate religion (which I hold is, for Jews, Christianity), and with the world beyond.

Finally, this new mutuality requires that both communities respect the integrity of the secular order, and do so with theological cogency. In America, that means respect for the *novus ordo seclorum*, carefully distinguishing its legitimate moral claims from the illegitimate philosophical claims of those who would insist that secularism can be its only sufficient foundation. This respect for the integrity of the secular order requires Jews and Christians to repudiate those ultratraditionalist elements in either community who wish simply to annul modernity *in toto* and return to their nostalgic vision of some form of theocratic

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polity. Both Jews and Christians should have learned enough from modern history to know that the only means available for restoration of any such *ancien régime* come from Fascism in its various guises—the most hideous caricature of the Kingdom of God.

Whether the possibility of this new Jewish-Christian relationship will be realized in and for our time will depend in large measure on the theological ingenuity, philosophical perspicacity, and historical insight of leading thinkers in each community. For the most part, their work, both separately and in concert, still lies before them. FT

Root Cellar

Moving in the cool cellar gloom
Among the dusty bulbs and withered tubers
Of last year's old dispensation,
I marvelled at their mummy masquerade:
Dry as death, their brittle skin flaking
Under my curious fingers, there they lay,
Half-burnt embers of a secret fire,
All in a heap, helpless, taking up space
I could have used to store the jars of preserves
That clutter the floor like minuscule burial urns
Standing solemn and still in the cellar gloom.
I wondered at their secret, curious sleep
(Of the bulbs, I mean) and at their deathlessness.
I thought of the warm spring winds
Fanning their hidden fire into blazes of bloom
Along the garden path, now buried in snow.
I stood for a while, alone in the cellar's chill,
Like one who has stumbled into an ancient tomb
And hears, watchful and still in the waiting dark,
The quick restless racing of his heart,
Incongruous among the slumbering kings.
Suddenly I knew my work was done.
Rather, it would wait for another day
When, sad with the madness of the upstairs world
And burdened with things that simply had to be done,
I'd come to the cellar just to putter about,
Doing really nothing — you might call it play;
Until the curious stillness of the bulbs
Reminds me that I am a stranger here
Among these sleeping roots and drowsing things.
Then, not unhappily, I'll slip upstairs,
Ready to face the madness and the light.
The cellar's a place to play in, not to stay in.

James M. Deschene

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The Soul of the American University

George M. Marsden

Our subject is one of those peculiar phenomena taken for granted in the contemporary world but which from an historical perspective seem anomalous. The phenomenon is that the huge numbers of Protestants in the United States support almost no distinctively Christian program in higher education other than theological seminaries. Even though over 60 percent of Americans are church members and more than half of them are Protestants and over 55 percent of the population generally say that religion is "very important" in their lives, very few people seem to think that religion is "very important" for higher education. Protestants in America are divided about evenly between evangelical and moderate-liberal. Yet neither group supports any major universities that are Protestant in any interesting sense. They do have a fair number of small liberal arts colleges. Those schools that are connected to mainline denominations tend to be influenced only vaguely by Christianity. The more than a hundred evangelical colleges are more strongly Protestant. Some of these are fairly good colleges. But their total number of students is about the same as that of two state universities. There is almost no Protestant graduate education outside of seminaries.

From the point of view of the churches, it is especially puzzling that both Protestant leadership and constituencies have become so little interested in Christian higher education. When clergy lament that lay people are uninformed, why do they not encourage Christian collegiate education? When laypeople complain that the clergy are often poorly educated, why do they not support colleges and universities that would send some of their best men and women to divinity schools? When religious leaders deplore the spread of alien philosophies, why do they not have any serious interest in graduate education?

This situation is particularly striking in light of the long tradition of Protestant higher education. The Reformation began at a university with a scholar's insight, and educational institutions long played a major role in Protestant success. Educated clergy were essential to the challenge to Catholic authority, and for centuries in Protestant countries, including the Protestant colonies in America, clergy typically were the best educated persons in a town or village. In this country, until well into the nineteenth century, higher education remained primarily a function of the church, as it always had been in Western Civilization. Most educators were clergymen and the vocation of professor was not clearly differentiated from that of clergy. The history of American higher education is not, of course, strictly Protestant. The Catholic experience in particular presents a significant alternative. Nonetheless, until recently, Protestants and their heirs were overwhelmingly dominant in setting the standards for American universities. If these schools had a soul, in the sense of a prevailing vision or spirit, it had a Protestant lineage.

Until the Civil War era, the vast majority of American colleges were founded by churches, often with state or community tax support. Since higher education was usually thought of as a religious enterprise as well as a public service, it seemed natural for church and state to work hand in hand, even after the formal disestablishment of the churches. Protestant colleges were not only church colleges, but also public institutions. Even the state colleges or universities that were founded after the American Revolution, sometimes with Jeffersonian disestablishmentarian intentions, had to assure their constituents that they would care for the religious welfare of their students. Almost all were or became broadly Protestant institutions, replete with required chapel and often with required Sunday church attendance. As late as 1890, a survey of twenty-four state institutions showed that twenty-two still held

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either required chapel or voluntary chapel services in university buildings, and four required church attendance. These were just the *state* schools. Church-related colleges and universities, which still typically had clergy for presidents in 1890, were much more rigorously Protestant.

The peculiarity of the contemporary situation, then, is all the more striking, not only because Protestants have forsaken a long tradition of leadership in Christian higher education, but because they have forsaken it so recently and forgotten it so completely. Even throughout the first half of the twentieth century, American colleges and universities typically showed a concern to support religious practice that most university people today would find unthinkable. Again, we can make the point most strikingly by looking at state institutions. A 1939 survey of state universities and colleges showed that 24 percent still conducted chapel services, and at 8 percent these were required. Over half (57 percent) of the state schools took financial responsibility for special chapel speakers or for religious convocations. Forty percent subsidized voluntary religious groups. Though compulsory chapel was indeed coming to an end in state institutions and some states banned the teaching of theology in their schools, compensatory efforts to support voluntary religion developed elsewhere. Between the world wars, there was a substantial movement to add religion courses, departments, or schools of religion at state schools. The best known of these is the Iowa School of Religion, founded in the 1920s, which balanced Protestantism with representatives of Catholicism and Judaism, but was originally designed to promote the practice of religion and the training of religious leaders, not just the detached academic study of religion. The University of Illinois in the 1920s began allowing qualified campus ministries to offer courses for university credit. Remarkably, the Catholic Newman Foundation still continues this practice, although Protestants abandoned it in the face of widespread faculty opposition in the 1960s.

Once again, we have been talking only about state schools. Religion was more prominent and prominent for longer at most private schools, most of which had a Protestant heritage. Yale did not drop compulsory chapel until 1926 and Princeton did not abandon it completely until 1964. The University of Chicago, founded as a Baptist school in the 1890s, was intended by its first president, William Rainey Harper, to support a civilization that would be based on biblical principles. Methodists also founded an impressive string of universities, including Duke, Emory, Boston University, Syracuse, Northwestern, Southern Methodist, and the University of Southern California, most of which included divinity schools. When Duke was founded in 1924, its founding document stated that "The Aims of Duke University are to assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. . . ." Until the 1960s, Duke continued to require undergraduates to take courses in Bible. So did Wellesley College, founded as an evangelical college in the 1870s by friends of Dwight L. Moody.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the effort to preserve some prominence for religion at prestige universities was perhaps best symbolized by the building of massive chapels at schools such as Princeton, Duke, and Chicago, or the Harkness Tower at Yale. From another perspective, however, these architectural statements might be seen as final compensatory gestures in the face of the overwhelming secularization that actually was taking over the schools.

Part of the reason why the religious dimensions of American higher education in the first half of the twentieth century have been so thoroughly forgotten is that even by then they had become peripheral, if not necessarily unimportant, to the main business of the universities. Then, under the heat of new cultural pressures in the 1960s and beyond, most of what was substantial in such religion quickly evaporated, often almost without a trace and seldom with so much as a protest.

So the puzzle is why a Protestant educational enterprise that was still formidable a century ago, and which until then had been a major component of the Protestant tradition, was not only largely abandoned, but abandoned voluntarily. Or in a larger sense, why has Christianity, which played a leading role in Western education until a century ago, now become not only entirely peripheral to higher education but in fact often come to be seen as absolutely alien to the educational enterprise?

When we ask such questions, it is not to suggest that there was a lost golden age to which we should return. From my own point of view of more-or-less traditional Protestantism, the abandonment of interest in Christian higher education by most Protestants is indeed a loss. So is the absence of any substantial place for explicitly Christian perspectives among the various viewpoints represented in academia today. I am convinced that such perspectives are intellectually viable and can and should shape Christian institutions. On the other hand, many Christians would agree that the secularization we are here describing was not all bad. Much of it was the dismantling of a vestigial religious establishment in which a religiously defined social elite imposed formal religious practices on all who would enter the social mainstream. Moreover, the colleges of the nineteenth-century Protestant establishment were typically meager affairs of a few hundred students, hardly comparable to the great universities they often fostered. Whatever their virtues (and they had many), they needed to be changed in substantial ways if they were to survive and serve in twentieth-

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century settings. Many of the Christian dimensions of the older institutions that were lost were part of tradeoffs that seemed necessary to meet the demands of modernity.

So the story is not simply that of some bad, or naive, or foolish people deciding to abandon one of the most valuable aspects of the Protestant heritage. Rather it is more a tale of some people recognizing serious problems in relating their heritage to the modern world. Whether the results were an improvement, or even coherent, is another question. Nevertheless, educational leaders were responding to some extraordinarily difficult dilemmas, and they cannot entirely be blamed for some of the unintended results of their choices.

What I propose in the present analysis is to emphasize three major sets of forces to which the leadership of emerging universities and their constituencies were responding: first, those having to do with the demands of technological society; second, those having to do with ideological conflicts; and third, those having to do with pluralism and related cultural change. Our understanding of how the current soul of the American universities has been shaped by these forces can then provide a foundation for considering where Christians and other religious people should go from here with regard to mainstream American higher education.

I

The American old-time colleges that dominated the educational scene until after the Civil War retained the outlines of the system of higher education that had prevailed in the Western world for seven centuries. Higher education simply *meant* expertise in the classics. Students had to show proficiency in Latin and Greek for admission and spent much of their time reciting classical authors. Some students might be only in their mid-teens and the conduct of the schools was strictly regulated on the principle of *in loco parentis*. Much of the students' work and daily activities was supervised by a number of tutors, recent graduates usually preparing for the ministry. Professors, who might well be clergymen, also taught a variety of subjects, though they might also cultivate a specialty. Some natural science had been worked into the curriculum as had some small doses of modern subjects, such as political economy. The capstone of the program was a senior course in moral philosophy, taught by the clergyman president. This course applied Christian principles to a wide variety of practical subjects and also was an apology for Christianity, typically based on Scottish common sense philosophy. It would also be preparation for citizenship—a major goal of these colleges. The schools required chapel twice daily, required Bible study, and often required church attendance. These colleges had no real place for scholarship. Theological seminaries, new to America in the nineteenth century, provided the closest thing to any graduate education. Theological reviews were the leading scholarly journals of mid-nineteenth-century America.

Two major pressures combined to bring the collapse of this clerically controlled classicist education by the end of the nineteenth century. One force was the demand for more practical and scientific subjects in the curriculum. This American ideal for education was institutionalized in the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, encouraging the state schools oriented toward agricultural and technical education that developed as alternatives to the liberal arts colleges.

The greater force bringing an end to the old classicist colleges was the demand that led to the establishment of universities and graduate education in the decades following the Civil War. Reformers correctly pointed out that for American civilization to compete in the modern world, it would have to produce scholars, and they understood that the amateurism of clerically controlled classicism provided little room for scholarly specialization.

Clerical control of the colleges was thus identified with classicism and amateurism by modern standards. Inevitably, the old-guard clergy defended the system that had helped secure their status as guardians of higher learning. This defense was also inevitably intertwined with defending the Christian character of the old curriculum and of the tightly disciplined collegiate life.

The traditional Christianity of the old guard thus typically came to be cast as the opponent of educational openness, professional progress, and specialized scientific inquiry. Some of the opponents of traditional Christianity made the most of this sudden embarrassment of the old establishment. Andrew Dickson White, founding president of Cornell, for instance, published *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom* (1896) in which he projected into the past a supposed opposition of dogmatic Christianity to scientific progress. The problem for White was not Christianity *per se*, but theology, or traditional Christian dogmatism associated with clerical authority.

To reformers it seemed that colleges had to be freed from clerical control, and hence usually from traditional Christianity, in order to achieve something that we take for granted—the emergence of higher education as a separate profession, distinct from the role of clergy. Until this time, although many educators were not clergy, the two positions were not clearly differentiated. Now collegiate education became a distinct profession. And, as was happening with other professions at this time, standards were established that would control membership in the profession. Hence graduate education was widely instituted in the decades following the Civil War, and eventually the Ph.D. became the requirement for full membership in the

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profession.

Graduate education and accompanying research, which reformers meant to be the real business of the universities, were free of the old collegiate structures and associated Christian controls. Graduate students were older and exempted from disciplines such as chapel and church attendance. Moreover, the natural scientific model for research that dominated the new academic profession proclaimed, as we shall see, the irrelevance of religious belief.

Along with professionalization went specialization. By the 1890s, educators had established professional societies in many of the basic fields such as history, economics, sociology, psychology, and the natural sciences. Prestige in the profession now became dependent on producing narrow specialized studies.

It is important to note that this professionalization was not itself inherently or necessarily anti-Christian. It certainly marked an important step toward the secularization of American schools, but it did not necessarily grow out of ideological antagonism toward Christianity. That is, while it *happened* to be associated with some antagonism to more traditional Protestantism, which in turn happened often to be associated with the old order, it was not either necessarily or usually associated with antagonism toward Christianity *per se*. In fact, it was often promoted in the name of a broader, more open Christianity that was now taking more seriously its cultural responsibilities.

This illustrates an important point regarding secularization in the United States. Much of it appeared in a form benign toward Christianity. Secularization in the modern world can be advanced in two major ways—methodological and ideological. (By secularization, I mean simply the removal of some activity of life from substantive influences of traditional or organized religion.) We will consider ideological secularism later; but methodological secularization takes place when, in order to obtain greater scientific objectivity or to perform a technical task, one decides it is better to suspend religious beliefs. Courts of law generally follow this methodology. So do most scientific and technological activities. Most of us, whether strongly Christian or not, approve of such secularization in many cases. We do not want the pious mechanic of our car to tell us that there may be a devil in the carburetor. In the increasingly vast areas of our lives that are defined by technical activities, we expect religion to play, at most, an indirect role.

Christians could therefore readily support many sorts of methodological secularization. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, the champions of professionalization and specialization in American higher education were themselves predominantly Christians—usually somewhat liberal Christians, but serious practicing Christians nonetheless. For example, Daniel Coit Gilman, the founder in 1876 of America's first research university, Johns Hopkins, was not, as is sometimes supposed, antagonistic to Christianity. He was, in fact, a serious liberal Christian and in his later years he served as Vice President of the American Bible Society.

Typically, American academics of this era maintained more-or-less separate mental compartments for their religious beliefs and for their academic practices, and they saw the two as complementary rather than in conflict. To pick one of many examples, James Burrill Angell, president of the University of Michigan from 1871 to 1909, was one of the first lay presidents of an American university and pivotal in making Michigan for a time the academic champions of the West. Angell nonetheless maintained that faith and science would harmonize. He remarked, for instance, that "blessed shall be the man . . . who through . . . science and . . . revelation shall learn the one full-orbed truth." And in 1903, he suggested that faith stands superior in this harmony of faith and reason. "After all, we are not primarily scholars," he maintained. "Our highest estate is that we are children of the common Father, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

One implication of this long-standing Protestant view of a harmonious division of labor between science and religion was that it encouraged narrow technical investigation as the model for every field. Since religious truths could stand above and supplement scientific truths, one need not worry excessively about loss of perspective by narrow inquiry. One could always leave the laboratory or one's social-scientific methodology and attend to higher service to God and humanity.

James Turner, in looking at early developments of the Ph.D. program at Michigan, concludes that in America the scholar was *defined* as a specialist and hence as not having responsibility to address a broad public. It is important to add that such a narrow definition was initially palatable because it came during a transitional stage, lasting until around World War I, in which scholars typically also had substantial religious affiliations and loyalties, or at least strong religious backgrounds, that provided an impetus for broadly humanistic public expression. Scholarly specialization could be justified by a higher ideal of service.

This two-storied division of labor between scientific technique and religion, or at least high moral ideals, helped foster the development of huge academic territories in which the ideal of free scientific inquiry would be the major operative standard. In Protestant America, such development was easier so long as scholars generally agreed that science and scientific method, however sacred within the professions, was not *all* there was.

It is one evidence of how sweeping was this establishment of independent territories that the ideal of

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academic freedom now emerged as the most sacred of all principles within the new academic professions. As historian Richard Hofstadter has documented, the principles of academic freedom had relatively little place in American higher education prior to this century. Rather, as a matter of course, American colleges had been responsible to their boards of trustees, who typically represented outside interests, including religious interests.

Early in this century, however, such outside control of academics came under sharp challenge. The Association of American University Professors, founded in 1915, strongly articulated this critique. In its first statement of principles, the AAUP declared that schools run by churches or by businesses as agencies for propagandizing a particular philosophy were free to do so, but that they should not pretend to be public institutions. Moreover, in addressing "the nature of the academic calling" (as they significantly still put it), the AAUP argued that "if education is the cornerstone of the structure of society and if progressing in scientific knowledge is essential to civilization, few things can be more important than to enhance the dignity of the scholar's profession. . . . " Scientific knowledge and free inquiry thus gained near-sacred status.

Such a view of the role of technical scientific knowledge, broadly conceived to include the social sciences and most other disciplines, in effect cleared a huge area of academic inquiry in which religious considerations would not be expected to appear.

Liberal Protestants, who dominated the universities, generally supported such developments. Since the heart of liberalism was its endorsement of the best in modern culture, scientifically based free inquiry, together with its technological benefits, would automatically advance Christian civilization. To build a better civilization was ultimately the Christian mission of the university. Woodrow Wilson, though a moderate in his personal theological views, summarized this agenda in his much noticed speech in 1896, "Princeton in the Nation's Service," which set the agenda when Wilson became Princeton's first lay president in 1902. Wilson is an interesting case, because in the same speech he questioned the over-extension of the scientific ideal to all disciplines. His antidote, however, was more humane humanities and more practical moral activity. So while as president of Princeton Wilson avoided statements about Christian theology that would appear in any way sectarian, he fervently preached morality and service.

Perhaps the outstanding example of a Christian promoting professionalization and technological methodology in the interest of Christian service was Richard T. Ely. Ely was one of the principal organizers of the American Economics Association in 1886 and its first secretary. In the first Report of the AEA, Ely declared that "our work looks in the direction of practical Christianity," and he appealed to the churches as natural allies of the social scientists. At the University of Wisconsin, where he taught, Ely came under fire in 1894 in one of the early academic freedom cases because his social Christianity, especially his pro-labor stance, offended some of the business supporters of the university.

It was natural, then, that when the AAUP was founded Richard T. Ely should be one of the authors of its General Declaration of Principles. In that Declaration we also find a combination of a faith in the ideal of independent scientific inquiry and the service ideal. In the organization's description of three major functions of the university, one is "To develop experts for various branches of the public service." Even as explicitly Christian ideals might be beginning to fade for many Protestant scholars, scientific professionalism still could be justified by its ability to provide "experts in the public service." In this view, there was nothing to worry about in the advance of independent scientific knowledge. It would still promote virtue.

The theme that ties together all the foregoing developments is the insatiable demand of an emerging industrialized technological society. More than anything else, what transformed the small colleges of the 1870s into the research universities of the 1920s and then into the multi-universities of the late twentieth century was money from industry and government for technical research and development. Universities became important in American life, as earlier colleges had not been, because they served the technological economy, training its experts and its supporting professionals, and conducting much of its research. At least as early as the Morrill Act of 1862, the demand for practicality had been reshaping American higher education. Schools have continued to offer as an option a version of the liberal arts education they traditionally provided; but such concerns and the faculties supporting them have played steadily decreasing roles among the financial forces that drive the institutions. Ironically, while twentieth-century universities have prided themselves on becoming free of outside religious control, they have often replaced it with outside financial control from business and government, which buy technical benefits from universities and hence shape their agendas. Any particular such technological and practical pressure can usually be justified, of course, by the higher cause of service to society, or at least by its profitability. So practically minded Christians, especially those who rather uncritically regarded American government and business as more-or-less Christian enterprises, have readily supported such trends. For instance, they typically want their children to gain the economic and social benefits of such education. Nonetheless, the dominance of these technological forces has expanded the areas of higher education where Christianity would have no substantive impact and where many Americans see

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it as having almost no relevance.

II

While the pressures toward technical specialization helped push traditional Christian educational concerns to the periphery of universities, support for such methodological secularization, as we have seen, came as often from Christians as non-Christians. Such methodological secularization, however, inevitably proved an important ally of ideological secularism. Christians who for methodological reasons thought that technical disciplines were best pursued without reference to religious faith promoted the same standards for those disciplines as did secularists who believed that all of life was best lived without reference to religious faith.

For our immediate purposes, it may be helpful to oversimplify a great deal by reducing to just three broad categories the ideological contenders for the soul of the American university over the past century and a quarter. First, there was traditionalist Protestantism which was dominant at the beginning of the era, but easily routed by liberal Protestantism, sometimes aided by some version of secularist ideology. Then, from about the 1870s until the 1960s, we have the dominance of a broadly liberal Protestantism which allied itself with a growing ideological secularism to form a prevailing cultural consensus. Since the 1960s, we see the growing of a more aggressive pluralistic secularism which provides no check at all to the tendencies of the university to fragment into technical specialities.

During the early era from the 1870s to about World War I, American colleges and university faculties included relatively few out-and-out secularists or religious skeptics. A few faculty members, however, were frank proponents of an essentially Comtean positivism. Comtean positivism proposed an evolutionary view of the development of human society in three stages. First, there was an era of superstition or religious dominance. Then came an era of metaphysical ideals (which was something like the liberal Protestant era). Finally, there was the promise of an era of the triumph of enlightened science which would free humanity from both superstition and metaphysics and allow it to follow a higher scientifically derived morality.

By the 1920s, such views were being more openly and widely expressed by academics, as is indicated by the influence during that era of John Dewey, who expressed almost exactly the Comtean view. Such views could blend with those of liberal Protestantism because they too promised to liberate American society through science. Arthur J. Vidich and Stanford M. Lyman in their recent study of *American Sociology* summarize this point in that field:

> By the third decade of the twentieth century an antimetaphysical Comteanism was combined with statistical technique to shape a specifically American positivism which, activated as social technocracy, promised to deliver America from the problems that had been addressed by the old Social Gospel. . . .

Liberal Protestants and such post-Protestants were on the whole allied during this period. Both agreed that traditional Protestantism was intellectually reactionary, and within only about fifty years, they effected a remarkable revolution that eliminated most traditional Christian views from respectable academia. Both liberal Protestants and secularists used the prestige of evolutionary biology to discredit biblicism and to promote the virtues of a scientifically dominated worldview. Liberal Protestants and secularists furthermore agreed that the scientific age had brought with it higher-level moral principles that could form the basis for a consensus of values that would benefit all humanity.

Typically, they hoped to find a base for such values in the evolution of Western culture itself. The curricular expressions of this impulse were English literature courses which emerged by the turn of the century and the inventions of the Western Civilization and humanities courses. Western Civ courses dated from the World War I era and eventually were widely adopted throughout the nation. One might wonder why secularist positivists would be among those promoting the humanities. Yet we must remember that positivism always included the promise of a higher morality. Since in its historicist worldview civilization itself was the only source of values, the study of the evolution of Western humanities was an important avenue towards positivism's ends. Liberal Protestantism promoted a similar outlook, seeing God progressively revealed in the best in civilization.

Such curricular measures can also be seen as major efforts to stem the tide of technological and professional pressures on higher education. With classical requirements collapsing rapidly and formal religion having been pushed to the periphery, the ideals and achievements of the humanities could still provide coherence to the curriculum.

World War II underscored the sense of the importance of education that would pass on the best of Western values. The attacks on broadly Christian and liberal culture from Nazism and fascism on the right and Marxism on the left presented the civilization with a major moral crisis. With traditional Christianity gone as a source for coherence, what else was there? The academic elite typically found the answer in the humane tradition of the West. This view is eloquently stated in the influential Harvard Report of 1945 on *General Education in a Free Society*. The Report clearly recognizes that "a supreme need of American education is for a unifying purpose and idea." Furthermore, it suggests frankly that "education in the great books

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can be looked at as a secular continuation of the spirit of Protestantism." As the Bible was to Protestantism, so the great books are the canon of the Western heritage that education should pass on. Such a heritage, the Report adds (in a nice reiteration of the Whig tradition), is education for democracy, since it teaches the "dignity of man" and "the recognition of his duty to his fellow men." Scientific education is part of that heritage, fostering the "spiritual values of humanism" by teaching the habit of questioning arbitrary authority. These ideals may be seen as the last flowering of the Whig-Protestant ideal which, as in the Report, celebrated the harmonies of broadly Protestant and democratic culture.

That the days were numbered when such elite educational ideals might hope to set the standard is suggested by the strikingly different tone of the even more influential 1947 report of The President's Commission on Higher Education for Democracy. This report was a sort of manifesto for the era of mass education that began with the return of the war veterans, and it indicates the direction that higher education would go once it became essentially a consumer product, largely controlled by government. In the following decades the vast expansion of higher education would take place overwhelmingly at state or municipal schools. Not only did this trend accelerate secularization, it also strengthened the practical emphases in American education. So while the President's Commission, like the Harvard Report, seeks coherence in a Western consensus, it finds it not in a great tradition, but in a pragmatist stance that assumes current democratic values to be a norm. The report has a thoroughly Deweyan ring to it. "A schooling better aware of its aims" can find "common objectives" in education. The consensus that will emerge embraces both practical education and general education, with the goals of the latter characterized as giving the student "the values, attitudes, and skills that will equip him to live rightly and well in a free society." These will be "means to a more abundant personal life and a stronger, freer social order."

Whatever the merits of such ideals, the rise of mass education after World War II made it almost inevitable that the pragmatic approach would triumph over adherence to an elite heritage in establishing a secular consensus. Nonetheless, through the Kennedy years the two approaches could grow side by side, sometimes within the same institutions. Humane liberal arts and practical approaches might be in competition, with the pragmatic gaining ground, yet most American educators agreed that there ought to be an integrative consensus of democratic values. By now the consensus was largely secular and most often defined by persons who were themselves secularists. Nonetheless, this was also an era of mainstream religious revival, and Christians, who were still numerically well-represented on campuses, seldom provided serious dissent from the search for democratic ideals. Since public consensus was the ideal, it was thought best to be low-key, entirely civil, and broadly inclusive about one's faith. Although openly confessing Christians could play supporting or even mildly dissenting roles in society (Reinhold Niebuhr comes to mind), the essential social ideals that higher education would promote would be defined in secular terms and largely by secularists.

Secularism as an ideology also received support from those who had less lofty reasons to abandon Christian standards. The revolution in sexual mores had an incalculable, but certainly immense, impact on weakening religious ideology and control. Established religion was widely associated with sexual repression. Changing national mores and opportunities presented by coeducation provided immediately compelling motives for ignoring religious issues during one's college years. Of course, the more spiritually minded often circumvented these issues with a species of methodological secularization. In any case, a history of changes in higher education no doubt could be written from the perspective of questions of sexuality alone.

III

The chief factor hampering Christianity in its response to the above challenges was the coincidence of those challenges with the further problem of the pluralistic nature of modern society.

The Catch-22 for Christians pondering the relationship of religion and public policy in a culturally diverse society is that if Christianity is to have a voice in shaping public philosophy, it seems that equity demands that it do so in a way that gives Christians no *special* voice. Public justice appears to demand of Christians that they receive no special privilege, but rather provide equal opportunity for all views. In a land where Christians have been culturally dominant and are still the majority, achieving such a public equity seems almost to require that Christianity be discriminated against. Liberal Christians in particular, who defined their mission largely in public terms and made equity a pre-eminent concern, could get caught in stances that would in effect lead to putting themselves out of business.

This dilemma is well illustrated in Protestant institutions of higher learning which, as we have seen, typically aspired to be public institutions as well as church institutions, pursuing the laudable goal of serving the public as well as their own people. The dilemma was not apparent, however, so long as Protestant cultural dominance was presumed. As long as it could be taken for granted that Protestantism was culturally dominant or that it ought to be dominant, the goal of church-related institutions was to shape the whole society according to Protestant standards. This meant not only that Catholics ought ideally to be converted to Protestantism, it also

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suggested that all Americans should adopt the set of cultural ideals that Protestants espoused. These ideals were classically expressed in the Whig tradition of the mid-nineteenth century. Perpetuating a strain of American revolutionary rhetoric that had its roots in the Puritan revolution in England, Protestants associated political and intellectual freedom with dissenting Protestantism, and monarchism, tyranny, and superstition with Catholicism. The Protestant-Whig ideals included affirmations of scientific free inquiry, political freedom, and individualistic moral standards such as hard work. Nineteenth-century college courses in moral philosophy were part of the effort to set such nonsectarian Protestant standards for the nation.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, nonsectarianism was beginning to have to be defined to include more than just varieties of Protestantism. Exclusivist Protestant aspects of the outlook were becoming an embarrassment in an increasingly diverse society. State schools felt the pressures first, but very soon so did any schools, especially prestige schools, that hoped to serve the whole society. In the decades from the 1880s until World War I such schools rapidly distanced themselves from most substantive connections with their church or religious heritages, dropping courses with explicit theological or biblical reference and laicizing their boards, faculties, and administrations.

At the beginning of the period, one important way of demonstrating that a nationally oriented school was "nonsectarian" was to avoid any formal creedal test for faculty. Major older schools, however, were still often hiring their own alumni, and old-boy networks could informally ensure some sympathy to religious traditions. Old-time college presidents also had substantial discretionary powers in hiring and could select persons of "good character." By the end of the century, however, such informal faculty screening for religious views was breaking down, though there remained some discrimination against Catholics and a great deal against Jews. Anyone with Protestant heritage, however, could gain a position regardless of his religious views or lack thereof. Once this pattern developed, it was only a matter of time before religious connections were dismantled.

How rapidly or how thoroughly this disestablishment took place depended, as I have been suggesting, on how public the institution took itself to be. Catholic schools and smaller sectarian colleges could retain exclusivist aspects of their heritages without difficulty. Prospective students knew that if they applied to a Notre Dame or a Concordia College they were choosing a church school with church standards. Some mainline colleges, such as a Westminster, a Bucknell, or a Davidson, could maintain a strong church identity during the first half of the twentieth century so long as they were willing to remain small and somewhat modest. But what of a Chicago, Yale, or Princeton that aspired to be a major culture-shaping institution? Was there any way they could remain substantially Christian?

Again, the liberal Protestantism that dominated most major American colleges and universities in this era offered a solution. Essentially, this solution amounted to a broadening of the old Whig heritage. The white Protestant cultural establishment could retain its hegemony if the religious heritage were so broadly defined as to be open to all opinions, at least all liberal opinions. As we have already seen, liberal Protestantism's two-level approach to truth allowed the sciences and the professions to define what actually was taught at universities, to which higher religious and moral truths could be added as an option.

To respond to pluralism and to retain hegemony, the specifically religious dimensions of Protestantism had to be redefined. By the early decades of the century, exclusivist elements of the heritage were abandoned and Christianity was defined more or less as a moral outlook. It promoted good character and democratic principles, parts of the old Whig ideals palatable to all Americans. So prestige universities, virtually all administered by men of Protestant heritage, could continue to promote the melting pot ideal of assimilation of all Americans in a broad moral and political consensus.

Even this solution presented certain problems, among them attitudes toward prospective Jewish students and faculty. Jewish immigration increased dramatically in the decades around the turn of the century, and Jewish university applications increased more. By the 1920s, despite some protests, most of America's prestige schools had set up quotas, often of around 15 percent, so as not to be overwhelmed with Jewish students. Sometimes they still cited the "Christian" ethos that they were ostensibly preserving, even though Christian teaching as such had disappeared. In many leading American schools Jewish faculty were discriminated against or excluded, especially in the humanities, until after World War II.

This example points out the larger problem. Could Protestants directing culturally leading institutions legitimately discriminate in any way against people from other traditions? Especially after World War II and the Holocaust, such issues became acute for American educators of Protestant heritage. The Whig-democratic ideals they had long proclaimed included, after all, the principles of equity and integration of all peoples that cultural outsiders were now claiming.

By now the answer to the puzzle with which we began this essay should be becoming apparent. Why did Protestants voluntarily abandon their vast educational empire and why are they even embarrassed to acknowledge that they ever conducted such an enterprise? The answer is that they were confronted in the first place with vast cultural trends such as technological advance, professionalization, and

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secularism that they could not easily control; and their problem was made the worse by pressures of cultural pluralism and Christian ethical principles that made it awkward if not impossible for them to take any decisive stand against the secularizing trends.

Although recognition of principles of equity came into play, I should perhaps not make the decisions involved sound so exclusively high-minded. An alternative way of describing what happened is that eventually the constituencies of schools—whether faculty, students, alumni, or other financial supporters—would not stand for continuing Protestant exclusivism. Such groups combined principles of tolerance with the self-interest of those in broadening constituencies that were not seriously Protestant. The most formidable such outside pressure came, for example, from the Carnegie Foundation early in this century when it established the college retirement fund that eventually became TIAA/CREF. Initially the foundation made it a condition for colleges participating in the program that they be nonsectarian. Other business contributors, as well as state legislatures, made similar demands. Administrators, who have been said to be able to resist any temptation but money, clearly had a good deal of self-interest in recognizing the values of pluralism and disestablishment.

Nonetheless, even if self-interest served mightily to clarify principle, disestablishment seemed from almost any Christian perspective the right thing to do.

One important encouragement to such disestablishment was that it could be justified on the grounds that voluntary religion was in any case more healthy than coerced religion. This was a strong argument raised against required chapel services, and almost invariably schools abolishing the requirement went through a transitional era of voluntary chapel attendance, which often flourished for a time. Moreover, during the decades around the turn of the century when formal disestablishment was taking place at the fastest rate, voluntary Christianity on campuses was probably at its most vigorous ever. College administrations often encouraged YMCAs and YWCAs, which acted much as InterVarsity Christian Fellowship does today. Students of the era helped organize the Student Volunteer Movement, under the initial sponsorship of Dwight L. Moody, and spearheaded the massive American foreign missionary efforts that reached their peak around World War I. Administrations also often encouraged Protestant denominational campus groups as well as their Catholic and Jewish counterparts. As long as such activities, however peripheral to the main business of universities, were available to the minority of students who might be interested, and as long as the religious programs at least modestly flourished (as they did through the 1950s), disestablishment could be seen as a reasonable accommodation to pressures for change.

This solution also fit the widely held view that science, which provided the ultimate guidelines for intellectual inquiry, and religion could operate in separate but complementary spheres. The division of labor between universities and theological seminaries, where professional religious training was still available, institutionalized the same principle. At some private universities, this differentiation was instantiated by the continuance of divinity schools, which made other disestablishment of Christianity at those institutions seem less threatening.

Whatever all the good and compelling reasons not to resist disestablishment, something seems wrong with the result, if viewed from a Christian perspective or in terms of the interests of Protestant churches and their constituencies. The result that today Christianity has only a vestigial voice at the periphery of these vast culture-shaping institutions seems curious and unfortunate from such perspectives.

One must ask then how it is that if Protestant leaders in higher education generally made the right—or at least virtually inevitable—decisions, what has gone wrong that the outcome should be so adverse to the apparent interests of Protestant Christianity?

I think the answer lies in some assumptions deeply embedded in the dominant American national culture that Protestantism had so much to do with shaping. These are simply the assumptions, already alluded to, that there should be a unified national culture of which Protestant religion ought to play a leading supportive part. At the time of the original British settlements in the seventeenth century, Christianity was presumed to provide the major basis for cultural unity. In the eighteenth century, when the colonies formed into a nation, Enlightenment ideals provided a less controversial scientific basis for a common culture, but Protestantism played a significant supportive role, especially in its nonsectarian guise.

Given such an attractive goal as a unified national culture, it was natural that the way in which dominant American Protestants would deal with cultural diversity was to attempt to absorb it. This was, in a sense, what the Civil War was about—a wrenching episode that illustrates both the virtues and the dilemmas of seeking nationally unified moral standards. In the next century, as increasing ethnic and religious diversity became impossible to ignore, the ideal became more vaguely Christian or Judeo-Christian and was referred to simply as "democratic." Through the Kennedy era, however, the ideal remained consensus and integration. The civil rights campaign and efforts to integrate blacks into the mainstream seemed to underscore the moral correctness of this strategy.

The intellectual counterpart to this strategy was the belief, supported by the assumptions of the Enlightenment, that science provided a basis for all right-thinking people to think alike. This view was especially important in the United States, since Enlightenment thought had so much to do with defining

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national identity. While there might be disagreement as to whether Christianity was integrative or divisive, scientific method was supposed to find objective moral principles valid for the whole race. Dominant Christian groups joined in partnership with science in underwriting this integrative cultural outlook. By the twentieth century, as traditional Christianity appeared too divisive to be an acceptable public religion and liberal Christianity began to drift into a grandfatherly dotage of moralism, scientific method emerged as the senior partner in the integrative project of establishing a national culture.

For American education this meant the continuing assumption that a proper educational institution ought to be based on an integrative philosophy. There was, of course, some internal debate as to what that philosophy should be or how it should be arrived at, but so long as proponents could claim something of the sanction of the scientific heritage, they could present their outlooks, not as one ideology among many, but as ones that were fair to everyone, since they were, if not wholly objective, at least more or less so.

As attractive as all this might seem and as necessary as it might be to cultivate some common culture, there were several things wrong with the universalist assumptions on which these integrative ideals were based. First, they were socially illusory, since America was not just one culture, but a federation of many. Second, the universalist views were intellectually problematic. Not all right-thinking people thought the way white Protestants did, and there was also no universal objective science that all people shared. Rather, science itself took place within frameworks of pre-theoretical assumptions, including religiously based assumptions. Finally, however attractive and plausible pursuit of this integrative cultural enterprise might be, it was not an enterprise to which Christians could forever fully commit themselves if they wanted to retain their identities as Christians. Christianity, whatever else it is, is not the same as American culture, and hence it cannot be coextensive with its public institutions. As we have seen, liberal Protestants during the first half of the twentieth century dealt with this problem not by sharpening their identity over against the culture, as did fundamentalist and Catholic intellectuals, but rather by blurring their identities so that there was little to distinguish them from any other respectable Americans. Hence, until the 1960s, they could continue to control America's most distinguished academic institutions. Only if there had been a strong sense of tension between Christianity and the integrative American culture—a tension that was embryonically suggested by neo-orthodoxy but never substantially applied to challenge the idea of a culturally integrative science—might there have been a search for radical alternatives. But a strong sense of such tensions was not a part of liberal Protestantism.

IV

This analysis of the problematic assumptions of dominant American culture and religion should help us to understand and evaluate what has happened to universities since the 1960s, including the demise of the old liberal Protestant establishment. Especially intriguing is the paradoxical character of the major contenders to fill the establishment's place.

By the mid-sixties, two forces were converging to destroy the secularized liberal Protestant (or now secularized Judeo-Christian) Enlightenment consensus through a sort of pincer action.

First was the triumph of mass education with its ideal of practicality. I need not detail this; but clearly it tended to destroy any real consensus in the universities, substituting for it a host of competing practical objectives. Such trends were reinforced by ever-increasing percentages of university budgets being drawn from government and business research grants, which moved the center of gravity away from the humanities. The more universities promote technical skills, the more they fragment into subdisciplines. Such tendencies are reinforced by the ongoing impetus of professionalism. For faculty, loyalty to one's profession overwhelms loyalty to one's current institution. The research necessary for professional advancement often subverts interest in teaching. Many observers have commented on these trends.

At the same time came the attack on the other flank from the counterculture, questioning the whole ideal of a democratic consensus and of the moral superiority of the now-secularized American Way of Life. An essential element in this attack was the critique of "the myth of objective consciousness," which pointed out the links among the establishment's claims to legitimacy, its tendency to submit to depersonalizing technological forces, and its Enlightenment heritage of scientific authority.

By this time, the old establishment had few grounds on which to answer such challenges. Its members had long since given up any theological justification for their views and the claims to scientific authority were already weakened by the many internal critiques of the myth of objectivity. Moreover, in practical terms scientific authority pointed in too many mutually exclusive directions to be of much use. The establishment's most plausible defense seemed to be to appeal to self-evident moral principles shared throughout the culture. Now, however, the high moral ground of liberty, justice, and openness had been captured by those who interpreted those terms in ways decidedly more radical than the establishment had ever conceived.

The result was that the old liberal (and vestigially liberal Protestant) consensus ideal collapsed. Although it lingers on among the older generation, its authority has been largely undermined by the forces that challenged it. On the one hand is the increasing growth

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of practical disciplines and subdisciplines that do not concern themselves with the big questions but engage in technical research or impart technical skills. The immense growth of the business major, which threatens to replace the humanities as the major alternative to natural science, is part of the trend. This may be seen as the triumph of methodological secularization, a force that had long threatened to take over the universities and the culture and was now largely unchecked by any competing humanities ideology.

At the same time, attempting to fill the ideological vacuum left by the decline of the old liberal-Protestant consensus is aggressive pluralistic secularism, growing out of the 1960s and flourishing as students of the 1960s become the tenured scholars of the 1980s and 1990s. In the name of equality and the rights of women and minorities, this group questions all beliefs as mere social constructions, denigrates what is left of the old consensus ideology, attacks the Western-oriented canon, and repudiates many conventional ethical assumptions.

V

In the context of all these forces, we can understand the residual formal role left for religion in universities. Clearly, despite the presence of many religion departments and a few university divinity schools, religion has moved from near the center a century or so ago to far on the incidental periphery. Aside from voluntary student religious groups, religion in most universities is about as important as the baseball team.

Not only has religion become peripheral, there is a definite bias against any perceptible religiously informed perspectives getting a hearing in university classrooms. Despite the claims of contemporary universities to stand above all for openness, tolerance, academic freedom, and equal rights, viewpoints based on discernibly religious concepts (for instance, that there is a created moral order or that divine truths might be revealed in a sacred Scripture), are often informally or explicitly excluded from classrooms. Especially offensive, it seems, are traditional Christian versions of such teachings, other than those Christian ethical teachings, such as special concern for the poor, that are already widely shared in the academic culture.

Conservative Christians often blame this state of affairs on a secular humanist conspiracy, but the foregoing analysis suggests that such an explanation is simplistic. Though self-conscious secularism is a significant force in academic communities, its strength has been vastly amplified by the convergence of all the other forces we have noted. Liberal Protestantism opposed traditional Christian exclusivism and helped rule it out of bounds. Methodological secularization provided a non-controversial rationale for such a move, reinforced by beliefs concerning the universal dictates of science. Concerns about pluralism and justice supplied a moral rationale. Moreover, to all these forces can be added one I have not discussed separately (though it may deserve a section of its own), the widely held popular belief, sometimes suggested in the courts but not yet consistently applied, that government funding excludes any religious teaching. With an estimated 80 percent of students today attending government-sponsored schools, this force alone is formidable.

We can see more specifically how religiously informed perspectives have fared in the university if we look briefly at the development of the actual teaching of religion in twentieth-century university curricula. During the era of liberal Protestant hegemony it became apparent that the forces of secularization had left a gap in which religion was not represented at all in the curriculum. To counter this, an influential movement developed between the World Wars to add courses in religion, some Bible chairs, some religion departments, and a few schools of religion, even at state schools. These were originally designed not only to teach about religion but also to train religious leaders and, at least implicitly, to promote religious faith. At state schools, at least, efforts were made to represent Catholicism and Judaism as well as Protestantism.

Such efforts were not always academically strong and did not have a major impact on university education. Nonetheless, they were substantial enough for Merrimon Cuninggim to conclude in a study conducted on the eve of World War II that "religion is moving once more into a central place in higher education." Moreover, the war brought religious revival and widespread concern about the moral and religious basis for Western Civilization and so enhanced the role of religion in the undergraduate curriculum. The revival and the prominence of some broadly neo-orthodox scholars also enhanced the prestige of university divinity schools, which long had been educating ministers and now were beginning to be seen as significant centers for graduate education in religion. Religion during this era was seen largely as involving ethical concern, and hence as constituting one of the humanities. Its place in the universities was justified by its contribution to helping define the moral mission of the university to modern civilization.

By the end of the 1960s, however, the character of religious studies in the universities had begun to change significantly. The number of religion departments increased dramatically, so that by the 1970s almost every university had one. However, the rationale for such departments had now largely shifted from being an element of the humanities—with an essentially moral purpose—to being a component of the social sciences. Correspondingly, religion departments hired fewer persons with clerical training and increasing numbers with scientific credentials. Practitioners of religious studies who flooded sessions of the American Academy of Religion now often employed their own technical language, which served to leg-

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itimate the discipline's status as a science. The new studies of the history of religions fit in well with the growing enthusiasm for pluralism in the universities. Religion departments increasingly gained legitimacy by focusing their attention on the non-Western, the non-conventional, and the (descriptively) non-Christian.

Such developments also provided impetus toward the growing popularity of a normatively non-Christian stance among practitioners of religious studies. Here I have to rely on impressionistic evidence and do not want to attribute larger trends simply to a secularist conspiracy. Nevertheless, my impression is that many religious studies programs are staffed by people who once were religious but have since lost their faith. Like most teachers, they hope that their students will come to think as they do, so that a goal of their teaching becomes, in effect, to undermine the religious faith of their students. In this pursuit they are aided by methodological secularization, which demands a detachment from all beliefs except belief in the validity of the scientific method itself. So a history-of-religions approach that suggests that the only valid way to view religions is as social constructs intentionally or unintentionally undermines belief in any particular religion as having divine origins. Of course, such negative impact of religious studies on religious faith is mitigated by many other persons in the discipline who entered the field as an extension of their religious calling and whose more positive perspectives are apparent despite pressures not to reveal any explicit religious commitment.

Those who oppose any visible commitment, however, hold the upper hand, whether because of lingering beliefs in scientific objectivity, concerns over pluralism, or alleged legal restrictions. I have even heard the suggestion that no person who believes a particular religion should be allowed to teach about it. Although this proposal is not, I think, anyone's actual policy, one cannot imagine it even being suggested about women's studies or black studies. It is rather like saying that at a music school no musicians should teach. And it is doubtful whether this rule would be proposed regarding a Hindu or a Buddhist. The more common rule, of course, is that in the classroom all evidence of belief must be suppressed, which means in effect that operative interpretative perspectives of believers must be kept hidden from students. Again, this rule is most consistently applied regarding traditional Protestant or traditional Catholic belief. Liberal Protestants may still be advocates if their religious expressions are largely confined to an ethic of political progressivism. Nontheists may openly express their views concerning theism.

Part of the problem, of course, is that in the field of religion we are still dealing with the vestiges of a cultural establishment. Hence it is to some extent understandable that any Christianity that implies some exclusivism should come in for special attack, since it so long has been used to support special privilege.

In any case, the presence of religion programs in universities is, on balance, not a countervailing force to the secularization of universities that we have described. It is especially ironic that their presence is sometimes used to assure pious legislators or trustees that religion is not being neglected at their universities. Religion may not be neglected, but its unique perspectives, especially those of traditional Christianity, are often excluded and even ridiculed.

VI

So what attitude should those of us who are seriously Christian in academically unpopular ways take toward contemporary university education? Should we attempt to have our distinct intellectual perspectives heard, or must we simply give way before overwhelming trends, perhaps living off the residual capital of the old establishment or finding refuge at university divinity schools? (These latter, I might add, especially those that try in some way to be distinctly Christian, appear increasingly anomalous in the overall picture.)

Clearly, it seems to me, it would be impossible for us to return to the days of a Christian consensus, liberal or conservative, even if we wanted to. Realistically, there is no way to reestablish in public and prestige private universities anything resembling even a broad Judeo-Christian moral consensus. At least we could not call it that. Reactions against its identification with Western culture are too strong. Moreover, religious conservatives and liberals have insurmountable disagreements as to what any such consensus might look like.

So what alternative is there other than to continue doing our jobs and allowing the trends that have been building for the past century to run their course? How long will it take for distinctive Christian perspectives, other than those provided by voluntary campus organizations, to disappear entirely from America's leading universities?

Clearly it would take another major essay to propose adequate alternatives. Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out that there are two major strategies available.

The first is for seriously religious people to campaign actively for universities to apply their professions of pluralism more consistently.

I think we can clarify this proposal if we first notice a revealing feature of some of the post-1960s university pluralism. On the one hand, one of the most conventional ideas of campus pluralists is that all moral judgments are relative to particular groups; at the same time, many of these same people insist that within the university their own moral judgments should be normative for all groups. In a sense what is happening is that the post-1960s, postmodernist generation so influential in contemporary academia is falling into the same role played by the old white Protestant male establishment. Despite their rhetoric of pluralism and their deconstructionist ideologies, many in practice behave as though they held Enlightenment-like self-evident universal moral principles. As with the old

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champions of liberal consensus, they want to eliminate from academia those who do not broadly share their outlook. In fact, their fundamental premise that all truth claims are socially constructed is not far removed from that of old-style liberal pragmatists. Like the pragmatists, who also thought they were attacking the Enlightenment, they in practice need to presume a more universal moral standard in order to operate. For old-style pragmatist liberals such often unacknowledged standards were the principles of modern Western democracy. For the postmoderns a more broadly inclusivist world-oriented moral absolutism is substituted.

My proposal would be to try to eliminate this anomaly. It seems to me that, so far as public policy is concerned, some version of pragmatic pluralism is indeed the only live academic option. It is deeply ingrained in the American tradition and it is difficult to envision a viable alternative. My only proviso is that it ought to be challenged to be more consistently pragmatic and pluralistic. If in public places like our major universities we are going to operate on the premise that moral judgments are relative to communities, then we should follow the implications of that premise as consistently as we can and not absolutize one, or perhaps a few, sets of opinions and exclude all others. In other words, our pluralism should attempt to be more consistently inclusive, including even traditional Christian views.

This suggestion for a broader pluralism does not mean that it was a mistake for those who have managed our universities, whether Christians, advocates of the Enlightenment, old liberals, or post-1960s pluralists to seek some working consensus of shared values. Even decontructionists, it appears to me, cannot do without some such consensus. Rather, without illusions that our worldview will be shared by all others, we can nonetheless look for commonalties in traditions that can be shared. In fact, there are more such commonalties than we might imagine, since persons living in the same era share many of the same experiences. For instance, a common consensus has developed across most American communities that women and minorities should not be discriminated against in higher education. It makes sense to build university policy on such widely shared principles.

Once we get this far, however, the question is what, if anything, do we exclude? Clearly not all views are permissible, and certainly some practices such as sexual or racial harassment are appropriately excluded. However, if we are serious about recognizing that we should not expect all communities to share our own moral judgments, we will not absolutize the views of the majority. Rather we will permit expressions of a wide variety of responsibly presented minority opinions, including some very unpopular ones.

Advocating such a broader pluralism does not imply that Christians should be moral relativists. In fact, we can believe, as the Jewish and Christian traditions have always held, that true moral laws ultimately are creations of God, whatever approximations or rejections of them human communities may construct. Nonetheless, we may also hold that so far as public policy is concerned in a pluralistic society, justice is best served by a Madisonian approach that thwarts the tyranny of the majority.

Especially in universities, which of all institutions in a society should be open to the widest-ranging free inquiry, such a broader pluralism would involve allowing all sorts of Christian and other religiously based intellectual traditions back into the discussion. If I interpret the foregoing history correctly, almost all the rationales for why such viewpoints were excluded (those having to do with disestablishment and beliefs in universal science) no longer obtain. The only major ongoing factor is concern for justice in a pluralistic society, but that concern would seem now to *favor* admission of religious perspectives.

Regaining a place for religiously informed perspectives will require some consciousness raising comparable to that which has come from other groups who have endured social exclusion. Nonetheless, I think it is fair to ask whether it is consistent with the vision of contemporary universities to discriminate against religiously informed views, when all sorts of other advocacy and intellectual inquiry are tolerated.

Of course, there would have to be some rules of the game that would require intellectual responsibility, civility, and fairness to traditions with which one disagreed. Nonetheless, it would seem to me to be both more fair and more consistent with the pluralistic intellectual tenor of our times if, instead of having a rule that religious perspectives must be suppressed in university teaching, we would *encourage* professors to reveal their perspectives, so that they might be taken into account. So, for example, if a Mormon, a Unificationist, a Falwell Fundamentalist, or a Harvey Cox liberal were teaching my children, it would seem to me that truth in marketing should demand that they state their perspective openly. The same rule should apply to all sorts of secularists.

Perhaps what post-Enlightenment universities, which presumably recognize that there is no universal scientific or moral vision that will unite the race, most need to do is to conceive of themselves as federations for competing intellectual communities of faith or commitment. This might be more difficult for American universities than for British or some Canadian universities, which have always seen themselves as federations of colleges, among which there was often diversity. American schools, by contrast, were shaped first by sectarian Christian and then by Enlightenment and liberal Protestant ideals that assumed that everyone ought to think alike. Nonetheless, if American schools would be willing to recognize diversity and perhaps even to incorporate colleges with diverse commitments, whether religious, feminist, gay, politically liberal or conservative, humanist, liberationist, or whatever, pluralism might

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have a genuine chance to thrive. The alternative seems to be to continue the succession of replacing one set of correct views with a new consensus that is to be imposed on everyone—which is not pluralism at all.

The other strategy, which may be more realistic, is that serious Christians should concentrate on building distinctly Christian institutions that will provide alternatives to secular colleges and universities. Perhaps the situation in the universities and in the academic professions that staff them is hopeless and irreversible. If so, Christians and other religious people should view the situation realistically and give up on the cultural illusion that serious religion will just fit in with the common culture.

Here I am thinking most immediately of building research and graduate study centers in key fields at the best institutions in various Christian subcultures. Such efforts would require some sacrifice of academic prestige, at least temporarily, and hence some sacrifice of possible influence in the wider culture. Nonetheless, if churches do their jobs well in higher education, they are likely to produce communities that are intellectually, spiritually, and morally admirable. They may not be widely liked in the broader culture, but being well liked by the culture has never been one of the gospel promises. Perhaps, given the historical developments we have observed, it is time for Christians in the postmodern age to recognize that they constitute an unpopular sect.

It is incumbent on seriously religious people in mainline educational institutions who do not like this sectarian alternative to suggest a better option. FT

Postcard to a Friend in Tuscany

Charlottesville, 9:00 A.M.

For once, snow; its drapery everywhere
Like the pure wool of midnight,
The thoughtless swooning of a shawl.

On the porch outside my window
Six sparrows breakfast on seeds,
Their world gone white, their life
Suddenly monastic and severe.

No wind; yet their brown, terrestrial habits
Flutter and jump.

And one lone cardinal,
Their master, their lord of terrible aspect,
Descends to join them, alights
With a flourish and rises again,

Weightless as ashes, vivid as flame.

Christopher Yu

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Review Essay

Out of the Fire and Into the Frying Pan

Stephen Arons

POLITICS, MARKETS, & AMERICA'S SCHOOLS. By JOHN E. CHUBB and TERRY M. MOE. *Brookings Institution. 336 pp. $28.95 cloth; $10.95 paper.*

Politics, Markets, & America's Schools is an enlightening, albeit statistically overstuffed, study of achievement, organization, and the political context of schooling. The authors, John Chubb and Terry Moe, reach one sound and important conclusion: deep structural reform of U.S. schooling, leading to a system of family choice among schools that operate independently of majoritarian politics, is the *only* possible way to save public schooling from self-destruction. Unfortunately, the path that Chubb and Moe follow to this long overdue conclusion (and many of the policy recommendations that accompany it) is so inadequate that their work could well do more harm than good to public understanding and policy debate.

The authors' "proposal for reform" envisions a system of diverse schools, some operated by private organizations, others by government, but all regarded as part of the restructured public school system. Parents would be permitted to choose—with the assistance of a state provided "Parent Information Center" and its local "Choice Office"—among schools meeting "minimal" state requirements. Public funds, roughly equalized across different income groups, would follow the students to their chosen schools as "scholarships." The state would continue to certify teachers, but would eliminate statewide teacher tenure. Each individual school would determine its own structure, including governance and admissions policies (consistent with nondiscrimination requirements). Judgment of any school's achievement or effectiveness would result not from state assessments of quality or performance, but from individual parental decisions about enrollment.

The most compelling reason for such a deep restructuring is to restore to American families and schools that freedom of belief and intellect guaranteed by the First Amendment and systematically denied to virtually all but the wealthy by the present structure of schooling. But Chubb and Moe miss this point entirely, choosing instead to base their conclusion upon narrow-gauge achievement benefits alleged to be the result of competition, consumer choice, and a partially regulated market. In so doing, they leave their proposal without the conceptual defenses essential to resisting a return to the disempowerment of parents, the resurgence of bureaucracy and a reductionist form of schooling, and increased government restrictions on freedom of intellect and spirit.

Chubb and Moe have intelligently analyzed the flaws in the myriad non-structural reforms that have flooded the public debate in the last decade. But in disregarding the First Amendment argument for school choice they have been guilty of the same short-sighted thinking and naive analysis that they rightly condemn in many other well-intentioned education reformers.

Because their analysis and proposal are based largely upon economic values and concepts, the adoption of their program would disappoint many who support school choice. American families in search of spiritually meaningful, intellectually engaging, and personally useful education for their children might escape some of the deadening influence of majoritarian political control of schools. But they would find their children entrapped by the narrow-minded and commoditized conception of education likely to emerge from an economic marketplace unregulated by the protections embedded in the First Amendment system of freedom of intellect and belief. To put the matter more simply, *Politics, Markets, & America's Schools* offers American schools and families a way to jump out of the fire and into the frying pan.

II

To appreciate how an otherwise intelligent, well-researched, and rightly motivated study could arrive at such a vulnerable proposal, it is necessary to state first what the right path to the restructuring of American schooling would be. John Stuart Mill took the first step on this path in 1859 in *On Liberty*:

> [State-sponsored education] . . . is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like

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> one another: and as the mold in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation, in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind. . . .

In the following years, state governments in the U.S. developed a system of universal, publicly funded compulsory education. The core assumption of this system was then and remains now the belief that it is appropriate for a majority of voters in a school district to control the content of the schooling of all children in that district. No matter how different the beliefs, opinions, or values of a dissenting minority of families may be from the prevailing majority, the dissenters' children must still undergo school socialization approved by the majority. Looked at from the minority perspective, the system seems to state that my neighbors have a greater right and power to control the education of my children than I do. The U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed and restated this ominous principle in *Island Trees v. Pico* (1982), when it agreed that local school boards must be permitted "to establish and apply their curriculum in such a way as to transmit community values. . . . There is a legitimate and substantial community interest in promoting respect for authority and traditional values be they social, moral, or political."

As both Mill and the Court imply, schooling can never be value-neutral; it inevitably conveys, as a necessary and important part of learning, values and beliefs through which action and understanding are filtered. The problem lies in determining whose values and beliefs schools will adopt. It would seem, therefore, that the Court has approved what Mill condemned: empowering the political majority to use schooling to regulate the fundamental freedoms of conscience, belief, and expression that the First Amendment withdraws from majority control.

The public has understood this. The past one hundred years has seen an endless struggle among various groups in society for control of the values that will form the content of public school curriculum, texts, and standardized tests. Whether these contests involve evolution and Genesis, traditional versus liberated roles for women, religion, moral relativism, or sex education, their results have been destructive. Either some parents lose the right to influence the value content of their children's education, or all parents lose to a least common denominator that will offend no one. The latter situation may seem preferable, but in avoiding offensiveness, this watered-down schooling anesthetizes students, renders their schooling meaningless, and commits scarce resources to pursuing the unworkable and unworthy goal of value-neutral schooling.

These perpetual struggles, imposed by the zero-sum game of majoritarian control of schooling, do not simply cripple and devalue the education of students. They also deprive many families of the right to pass on to their children the heritage and values in which their vision of life and self is anchored. Were the political majority allowed to have this same direct power over religious beliefs and education, the rebellion would be swift. It is a wonder that the same constitutional protection of freedom of belief has not been demanded for the schooling which Ivan Illich said has "become the established church of secular times."

The destructiveness of the present structure of schooling does not end with the dumbing-down of education or with restrictions on the freedom of intellect and belief of dissenting students and families. Struggles over the content of government schools also paralyze the governmental process within schools and undermine political institutions in the society generally. The Supreme Court recognized this risk in the famous flag-salute decision (*West Virginia v. Barnette*, 1943): "Probably no deeper division of our people could proceed from any provocation than from finding it necessary to choose what doctrine and whose program public education officials shall compel youth to unite in embracing."

Nevertheless, the people have gone right on struggling over what doctrine and whose program public education officials shall compel youth to unite in embracing. The Court has only rarely interfered, perhaps because there is no alternative to this struggle in a school system that puts political majorities in control of the socialization of all children. As the Supreme Court observed in the same flag-salute case, "If [public education] is to impose any ideological discipline . . . each party or denomination must seek to control, or failing that, to weaken the influence of the educational system."

Majority control of the content of public schooling is thus at the root of a series of deprivations of rights of belief and expression as well as problems of conflict-ridden government and ineffective, unsatisfying, and destructive schooling. That school choice has a role to play in resisting such a tyranny of the majority is made clear by another landmark Supreme Court case, *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925).

In spite of the defendant's name, the case was not decided as an issue of freedom of religion. In 1922, the state of Oregon had passed a xenophobic law requiring that all students attend public schools. Private schools and the right of parents to choose them were effectively extinguished by the law until the Court declared it unconstitutional three years later. In upholding the right of families to choose alternatives to government (majoritarian) schools, the Court uttered its now-famous ruling, "the child is not the mere creature of the state."

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In *Pierce* the power of the political majority over school socialization and individual freedom of belief and intellect was curbed, and the idea that even secular schooling inevitably involves the formation of conscience was embedded in law. In the Court's words, "the act of 1922 unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control."

But economic developments have rendered this constitutional right to choose an alternative to government schooling all but meaningless. The cost of paying tax for the support of government schools as well as tuition for attending a non-government school has become prohibitive for the vast majority of families. In essence, those who dissent from majority values in schooling have faced the choice between sacrificing their freedom of belief and expression to obtain a government-subsidized education or paying twice to secure their birthright under the Constitution.

What this analysis suggests is that we need a separation of school and state to match the separation of church and state. The government (read, political majority) must be denied the power to control the content of schooling just as it is denied the power to establish religion or prohibit its free exercise. These fundamental political, constitutional, and human rights, and not the benefits of competition in an economic market, are or ought to be the driving force behind the growing public demand for choice in education. Chubb and Moe's work, by losing sight of these rights, increases the likelihood that American families will settle for a poor substitute for real school choice and a minuscule increase in freedom of intellect and spirit.

III

There are four fundamental flaws that flow from failure to ground an argument for school choice on First Amendment freedoms of belief and expression. The most glaring of these flaws is seen in the authors' blasé attitude toward the inclusion of religious schools in a system of choice. In presenting the proposal for reform which arises from their study, Chubb and Moe state, "Whether private schools are included is simply a matter of policy—they need not be." They further state that "Our own preference would be to include religious schools as well, as long as their sectarian functions can be kept clearly separate from their educational functions."

Here Chubb and Moe indicate misunderstanding both of the nature of education and of freedom of belief. No education, including religious education, can be neutered—deprived of its value content—and still be regarded as education. Moreover, the approach to school choice represented by the "secular/sectarian" distinction has been tried and declared unconstitutional precisely because that distinction cannot be made. In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* twenty years ago the Court invalidated public funds for secular education in religious schools because the secular could not be distinguished from the religious without entangling the government in the affairs of religion.

Much more to the point, in a school-choice argument built on the First Amendment rather than market economics, religious schools *must* be included. It is not "simply a matter of policy." How could freedom from the imposition of government-sponsored ideology be accorded by a system of school choice without recognizing the rights of families whose values are religiously centered? On what basis could the society, or those creating a new school structure, legitimately distinguish between secular and sectarian values as worthy of tax-funded "scholarships"? These questions are especially hard to answer in view of the fact that there is no constitutional impediment to providing equal choice to families who choose religious schools, so long as the parents' choice is the operative one and there is no financial incentive for choosing a religious school over a secular one.

The second fundamental flaw in *Politics, Markets, & America's Schools* is that its analysis contains no principle that can be used either to keep the majority from imposing its values on nominally independent schools or to sustain those higher-order values that should be applied to all schools. As the authors say, "Direct democratic control stimulates a political struggle over the right to impose higher-order values on the schools through public authority. . . ."

In this statement, Chubb and Moe make the important point that it is our majoritarian school system that produces endless struggles over school content. But their argument goes at once too far and not far enough. It goes too far because it makes the assumption, echoed elsewhere in the book, that there are no higher-order values that should be imposed upon schooling. It does not go far enough because it provides no principle for invalidating attempts by the majority to impose a system of regulations so thorough-going as to render all "independent" schools virtually identical.

Basing the argument and proposal for school choice on First Amendment freedoms solves both of these problems at once. It is a well-established part of First Amendment law that the government may make no content-based regulation of expression or belief unless a compelling justification for such overriding of First Amendment rights is presented. The government—or the political majority—may regulate the so-called non-content "incidents" of First Amendment rights, such things as time, place, or loudness of expression. Under this theory, the government could impose fire and safety standards on schools or other places of communication. The government may also override First Amendment rights—imposing higher-order values—when the public interest in so doing is "compelling." Thus racial discrimination in schools must be pro-

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hibited, and minimum standards of literacy or familiarity with constitutional values might be required in otherwise diverse schools.

Chubb and Moe leave their newly independent schools without any protection against a constant encroachment by state authorities—through standardized testing, curriculum requirements, teacher certification standards—on their content and pedagogy. The statement that state approval of schools of choice "should be quite minimal" will hardly be encouraging to those existing independent schools already struggling against state regulation. It will certainly be inadequate protection once the political majority has lost its power to control every school in the district through local and state bureaucracies. Under the Chubb and Moe proposal, state education authorities and their constituent interest groups will constantly be arguing that *every* regulation they desire is essential. The authors' analysis gives us no way to distinguish those regulations that truly are essential from those that represent nothing more than a return to the bureaucratic school world in which everything is either required or forbidden.

The third significant flaw in *Politics, Markets, & America's Schools* is more amorphous. It traces back to the achievement-based judgments that the authors make about school effectiveness. Their study is grounded on the provable hypothesis that majoritarian as opposed to market organization of schooling creates conditions that depress student achievement. But even though they acknowledge that "virtually everything about good education . . . defies formal measurement," their measures of achievement are narrow, being restricted to those attributes of schooling that can be measured by standardized tests. Though interesting and significant, this basis of judgment is insufficient. It reduces education to much less than any parent or student knows to be its true content. And it reduces to a kind of consumerism the justification for parental empowerment in a system of school choice.

The problem is aggravated when the authors discuss the role of parents in their children's schooling. Though ostensibly arguing for parent choice, Chubb and Moe treat parents rather shabbily. Direct parent involvement in schools is something "which can become burdensome," and schools that have a high level of parental involvement must put up with "parental interference." The data on effective independent schools and ineffective government schools suggests to the authors that "schools do not seem to benefit in a large or systematic way from direct parent involvement." These are problematic thoughts to accompany an argument for parent choice based on a quantitatively defined notion of school effectiveness.

In fact, the tone of the study seems to assume that education is just another commodity to be bought and sold under various economic and political conditions. There is virtually no discussion of either the deeply personal or broadly cultural aspirations and needs that individuals, families, and subcultures bring to education. There are disclaimers about performance measurements in education and about the limits of achievement testing. But one searches in vain in these pages for an appreciation of education as a process of culture-transmission and individual liberation, an untrackable journey without specifiable goals that cultivates the most basic freedoms of mind and spirit along with the practicalities of learning to influence and live productively within American culture.

It may be unfair to tax the authors excessively for their limited and reductionist vision of education. But the practical consequence of their failure to think more deeply about the nature of schooling is that they leave us with a model of school choice that is likely to victimize those families whose aspirations and understandings exceed those that inform this study.

This complaint flows into the fourth and final flaw of *Politics, Markets, & America's Schools*, its tendency to be naive and unanalytic in its approach to the economic model of the marketplace. Though scores of pages are devoted to a sharp-edged analysis of how majoritarian politics creates in the schools bureaucracy, oppressive regulation, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, and the stifling of teachers, students, and principals, the book barely mentions the problems caused by economic markets, consumerism, and the commoditization of education. It seems fair to ask whether market choice of schools—unchecked by the principles of freedom of belief, intellect, and expression—might not give rise to problems as severe as those attributed to majoritarian school structure.

A quick look at the "products" sold or the amount of meaningful choice permitted to consumers by such industries as energy, transportation, food, or housing might make one dread the inclusion of schooling in the market Chubb and Moe envision. Add to this an assessment of how much influence consumer choice provides over, for example, the environment in which we live or the way in which we develop as individuals and one becomes still more suspicious. The domination of the supply side of school choice by the ethos of economic markets might yield a nation of students well-trained to take their place in the workforce of international conglomerates. But it is not likely to provide an atmosphere conducive to either learning as liberation or teaching as a subversive activity.

The problem is not with a notion of schooling as a marketplace of choice that all families and children approach with roughly equal resources and that allows the same full freedom to educators. The problem is with basing the argument and structure of school choice upon an economic model instead of a marketplace of belief and expression envisioned and protected by the First Amendment. Chubb and Moe have provided important tools with which to subdue the tyranny of the majority in schooling. Unfortu-

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nately, they have barely stopped to think about whether the "invisible hand" of the economic market might not be every bit as tyrannical—every bit as bureaucratic, monolithic, reductionist, and disempowering of families—as the system of majority control of schooling has turned out to be.

What is missing from Chubb and Moe's otherwise helpful book is an analysis of how the principles of the First Amendment and a realistic understanding of the nature of education can together shape a system of school choice. Americans may be enamored of economic analyses of everything from environmental health to personal fulfillment, but American families and educators also know that there is more to schooling than the freedom to be a smart shopper.

From their own personal experiences and from their understanding of what makes constitutional democracy worth sustaining, Americans know that every family must have an equal liberty to choose schooling without being limited by accidents of family wealth, race, or religion. They know that every educator and every learner must be free of unjustifiable government restrictions if schooling is to support rather than undermine families. They know that every group of persons who wishes to create or sustain a community must be free to do so without the hierarchical imposition of order that is the accompaniment of bureaucracy. And most of all, they know that freedom of conscience, of belief, of intellect, of opinion, and of individual self-development are as much the foundation of school choice as they are of constitutional democracy.

In trying to convince a public policy establishment preoccupied with economic analysis that school choice is a worthwhile reform, Chubb and Moe have lost sight of the principles that underlie America's long-term dissatisfaction with its school system. This lapse alienates them from the most important potential supporters of a system of school choice—families, students, and teachers. If their analysis takes over the public debate, it will drive out more basic constitutional principles and educational understandings. We must hope that Americans hold out for a more realistically grounded and more thorough-going system of school choice, and do not accept the Chubb and Moe offer simply to substitute the frying pan for the fire. FT

Office Plaza, Sunday Morning

The blue garage can be itself again.
The cars have gone
down roads no live things dare
to run. Machines alone
are working in the mountain
all of glass, in the wasted bloom
of day.
        No weather enters there.
        But on the square below,
it's Sunday morning; no one's sitting
by the fountain
now except an empty blue garage,
except a mockingbird flitting
from garage to fountain

fountain to garage:
except a mockingbird, deep and long
drinking or filling a Room
in August in the sun with bits
of echo and of mockingbird song.

Ed Harbin

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Books In Review

Toward a Christian Critique of the Arts

SHAM PEARLS FOR REAL SWINE. By FRANKY SCHAEFFER. *Wolgemuth & Hyatt. 290 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by **Kenneth A. Myers**

IN 1948, A YOUNG AMERICAN minister from the conservative Bible Presbyterian Church moved to Lausanne, Switzerland, to serve as a missionary to Europe. Intending to work primarily as an evangelist, this earnest pastor was relatively sequestered from the contentious and obscurantist tendencies of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism. This physical and cultural distance from a spiritual community that had become crabbed and reactionary allowed Francis Schaeffer to re-examine the roots of his beliefs. A few years later, after moving with his wife Edith and his three daughters to a chalet in a mountain village, a time of spiritual crisis for Schaeffer led to an awakened faith and a new sense of vocation.

In the mid-1960s, when American society and culture were coming to a boiling point, Francis Schaeffer gave a series of lectures at Wheaton College in Illinois, the most prominent of the evangelical colleges at the time. Schaeffer's lectures (published in 1968 as *The God Who Is There*) went far beyond the sorts of issues that one might expect in such a setting. Henry Miller, the Beatles, Marshall McLuhan, John Cage, logical positivism, *musique concrète:* all were discussed with the intermediate goal of better understanding the consciousness of modern culture. But Schaeffer's ultimate purpose was not to rethink theology in light of modernity, but to re-challenge modern men and women with historic Christian orthodoxy. Schaeffer tried to understand everything from Michelangelo Antonioni to Frank Zappa in order to become more adept in the winning of souls and in the cure of them.

Thousands of evangelicals in the baby-boom generation were influenced by Schaeffer, either directly or indirectly. Much of the more engaged attitude toward contemporary cultural issues evident among evangelicals can be traced to his concerns. In his later years (he died of cancer in 1984) Francis Schaeffer became publicly identified with prolife causes, inspiring such figures as former surgeon general C. Everett Koop, Operation Rescue's Randall Terry, and John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute.

Francis Schaeffer's prolife activism also launched the public career of his only son, named after his father, but soon re-christened Franky. From his childhood, the younger Schaeffer showed interest in the arts, and his parents encouraged him. In 1981, Franky Schaeffer published his first book, *Addicted to Mediocrity: 20th Century Christians and the Arts,* an angry tract that echoed many of his father's themes about spirituality and culture and a few of his father's rhetorical flourishes. But there was a profound difference. Whereas Francis Schaeffer had labored for years to articulate an evangelical understanding of secular, alienated modern man (a labor that often resulted in tears reminiscent of Jesus' weeping over Jerusalem), Franky Schaeffer's first book set the tone for a decade of angry diatribes against fellow evangelicals.

FOR A WHILE IN the 1980s, Franky Schaeffer focused his attacks on various New Class evangelicals who were in his opinion too soft on abortion or too chummy with various leftish ideologies. But, aspiring painter and struggling filmmaker that he is, Schaeffer has

KENNETH A. MYERS *is the author of* All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians and Popular Culture.

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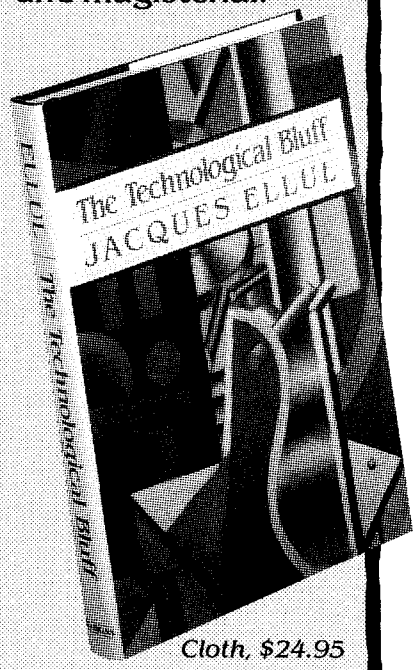

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been more persistently concerned with the sheer tackiness and Babbittry of evangelical culture, a spirit made flesh in such kitschy phenomena as "Smile, God Loves You" buttons, Christian theme parks, and Kneeling Santa Dolls.

Franky Schaeffer's latest book, *Sham Pearls for Real Swine*, continues the theme of his early work. The book's title (lifted from Churchill, one of Schaeffer's heroes) summarizes the author's impression of "a great deal of teaching in the Christian church concerning the arts, media, and our culture in general." Schaeffer directs his barbs at the evangelical-fundamentalist community in particular (and by explicit extension the cognate communities within American Catholicism), among whom thinking about culture is deficient, not to say philistine. As did his father, he condemns Christians for a false sense of spirituality that leads them to ignore the arts. He castigates evangelicals for holding to "current middle-American, post-Victorian ideas of propriety." He is furious that the Christian crusade to restore "traditional values" results in "middle-class pablum that will offend no one, cause no one to think, mean nothing, and leave its audience as comfortable and mindless as before they were fleetingly entertained by it. In other words, the 'traditional values' turn out to be the values of the 1950s middle America, not the far more robust traditions of Western culture."

Schaeffer wants his fellow believers to face up to the fact that reality is messy, and that truthful art (truth was a major theme in his father's work) requires faithful representation of that messiness. He offers "as an example of a movie telling the truth . . . about sin and depravity" the film *Sid and Nancy*, a biographical film about the lives of punk rocker Sid Vicious (of the Sex Pistols) and his girlfriend Nancy.

> In the movie, the sorrow and decadence of Sid and Nancy's lives were not glamorized. The truth was told. The ugliness of the debased, anti-Christian philosophy they lived by was portrayed as producing ugly results, as death-causing, tragic. To make a truthful movie like *Sid and Nancy* that is consistent with reality is ideally the goal for the Christian and non-Christian filmmaker alike.

Of all the films in all the world, *Sid and Nancy* is surely a poor choice as an ideal goal for anything or anyone. Such well-intended hyperbole is an example, too common in Schaeffer's writings, of a lack of nuance and balanced judgment. In this, one detects more than a bit of his father, whose sweeping statements about the history of Western thought or about particular thinkers often obscured important details in the interest of diagrammatic simplicity. One might also see an ironic kinship with the very "middle-American" sensibilities he is castigating. After all, one of the reasons people prefer *Die Hard* to *Jean de Florette* has something to do with the absence of a taste for subtlety. After a few pages of *Sham Pearls*, one may be sympathetic to the canon the author wishes to revere, but frustrated by the brusqueness of his reverence.

SCHAEFFER IS AT his most convincing when he lightens up and lets his love of film show through, especially as he chides Christians who take movies too seriously. Movies are, after all, fun, and fun is an important part of life for Christians as for everyone. Schaeffer seems to recognize this, and perhaps if his father had been an engineer or an insurance salesman instead of an intense expatriate Alpine prophet, he would find it easier to express it.

The attitudes and artifacts Franky Schaeffer criticizes may in some circles be sacred cows, but they are also sitting ducks. There is no question that evangelical tastes are low-to-middle brow at best, that great art and literature and music leave most evangelicals unmoved. It is also true that this is a situation which has some explanation in theology and which is in many ways unfortunate. But it is not the sort of thing, one would think, about which it is necessary to be too "prophetic."

Sham Pearls for Real Swine is largely a book about rejection: generally about conservative Christians rejecting or ignoring the arts from a lack of understanding; but more specifically (sometimes embarrassingly so) the rejection of struggling artist Franky Schaeffer by the community that should be grateful for his efforts.

> There are too few people in the church who comprehend the artistic struggle and encourage Christians to succeed in the arts. There are, however, many Christian guilt-mongers who place burdens on others that they themselves do not bear; their attitude is embodied in the what's-Christian-about-that? school of art critics, who do not understand the arts or the daily reality of the artist's struggle.

"As a Christian working in the arts," Schaeffer laments on the first page, "I have naturally looked to the church for encouragement." While one understands the frustration this might cause, one would think that years of lectures by his father about the deficiencies of the American church would have persuaded him that this was in fact a very *unnatural* thing to do.

"The dedicated Christian pursuing a career in the arts or media," Schaeffer complains, "is caught between a hammer and an anvil—the hammer of *closed-minded* secularism and the anvil of *closed-minded* fundamentalist Christianity." Well, yes. The message here and in much of the book is generally sound. But there is something disturbing about the presence, the self-consciousness, the voice of the messenger, something unseemly and finally unconvincing about his repetitive insistence that "I am an

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artist." Rejection, after all, is not in itself proof of one's standing either as prophet or artist. There might in both cases be other reasons why one is despised or rejected.

If Schaeffer had left himself out of this book, he might have made a more useful (if much shorter) contribution to an understanding of Christianity and culture. As it stands, *Sham Pearls for Real Swine* has too few real pearls, and is unlikely to convert the "swine" into lovers of the finer and more permanent things.

The Counterculture's New Mind

THE GENOCIDAL MENTALITY: NAZI HOLOCAUST AND NUCLEAR THREAT. By ROBERT JAY LIFTON and ERIC MARKUSEN. *Basic Books. 346 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by **Robert Royal**

SOME BOOKS—the detective novel is the most obvious genre—must be read as they are written, front to back. Peeking ahead spoils everything. Others, Hebrew texts and now Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Markusen's *The Genocidal Mentality* are better approached (though for different reasons) back to front. In their concluding chapter, Lifton and Markusen argue the need for a "species mentality" to replace the pervasive "genocidal mentality" they find in the modern world. A species mentality arises from species consciousness, and these two entities will lead us to species self. Radical ecologists will no doubt soon inform us whether this proposal constitutes a perverse and pathological speciesism. In the meantime, the bemused reader must first grasp where the authors wish to lead him before he will fully understand their analysis of the past.

For though the subtitle of this volume invokes the Nazi Holocaust and nuclear weapons, neither subject is essential to Lifton and Markusen's conclusion. They trace, with some insight and skill, how scientists who work on modern nuclear projects may become "numb" to the consequences of their labors, just as doctors and scientists who worked for the Third Reich refused to see the human horror behind their professional tasks. (It should be noted that for all their emphasis on parallels, the authors do concede the uniqueness of the Holocaust and acknowledge the disanalogies of the two cases.) Oddly absent from the authors' analysis is the central question of intentionality: in one case, participation in the crimes of a horrible regime; in the other, deterrence against aggression by a horrible regime. What counts, in the authors' view, is that both groups of scientists promote genocide. And a genocidal mentality has gripped all the rest of us who place our trust in nuclear weapons.

The gravamen of this volume is the presumed need for what Lifton and Markusen do not seem to recognize as an already tired, cliché-ridden, postmodern conception of self: "At issue is an expansion of collective awareness, an exalted sense of self, that embraces our reality as members of a single species and thereby opens up a new psychological, ethical, and political terrain." The Holocaust and the nuclear threat putatively show the necessity for this "new" terrain. But one feels that the authors might just as readily have reached their desired end by appealing to any of a number of the usual leftist suspects: sexism, racism, crimes against the environment, technology, middle-class materialism, etc. In fact, if the Soviet Union continues its sharp decline as a nuclear power and in the unlikely event that this book ever goes into a second edition, Lifton and Markusen may be forced to shift precisely to these targets to keep support for the "species self" a live possibility.

ROBERT ROYAL *is Vice President for Research at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.*

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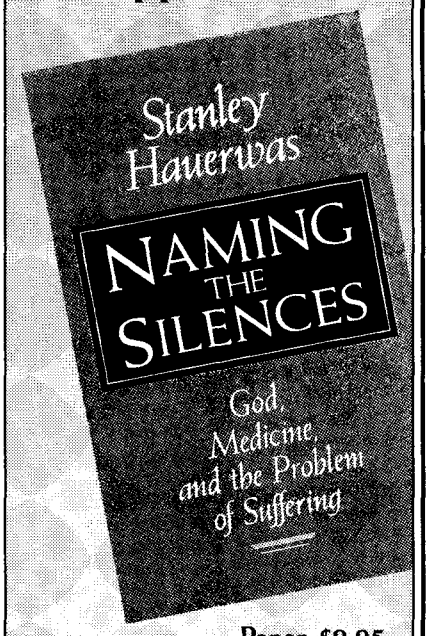

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The authors try to refute in advance any objections to their theories by a kind of psychological *ad hominem* argument. Thus those of us who have supported, however conditionally, nuclear deterrence have not merely embraced error. We are "nuclear selves" suffering from the delusion that our security depends on nuclear weapons. In some extreme cases—Edward Teller is the prototype for the authors—a certain "constellation" of the nuclear self even identifies the bomb with a quasi-religious salvation. Naturally, we all resist when this delusion is pointed out to us: "Strong antagonism to species consciousness is likely to result from fear—fear of altering a world one has come to know, fear of change in general, or fear of being weakened if one gives up reliance on nuclear weapons." In one of the world's longest psychological carom shots, the authors offer as an example of such antagonism the Ayatollah Khomeini, whose violent reaction to Salman Rushdie masked his fear of adaptations that were moving Iran "mildly in the direction of species consciousness."

THE PERSONS and institutions claimed for species consciousness form an odd lot: Gandhi and Martin Luther King, of course, but also Mother Teresa, the American Catholic Bishops (in their anti-nuclear mode and only when they are not hedging by conceding that deterrence may be justified as an intermediate measure), the Methodist Bishops (no hedgers they), the late Reagan presidency, which ceased speaking of the Evil Empire (the authors do not seem to consider that changes in the Soviet Union might have had much to do with the change in Reagan). For Lifton and Markusen, all the aforementioned adhere to "universal principles," the building blocks of an emerging and historically developing (end-of-history Hegelians, please take note) species consciousness.

Lifton and Markusen are ever alert to pounce on the slightest suggestion of the use of impersonal technology for the indiscriminate destruction of innocent human life. But in their elaborate excavations of sinister "systematic symbolizations" and "analogous" intentions, they manage to overlook the most tangible and widespread type of technological murder in all modern societies: abortion. The authors seem unaware of a possible psychological numbing of their own on certain questions.

Over a century ago, John Henry Newman recognized that all sorts of different developments in the modern world called for a corresponding "increment of soul." Perhaps Lifton and Markusen mean something similar by their rather daffy concept of "species self." The stylistic overtones of these two terms, however, say much about the difference between the two concepts, one firmly rooted in Western religion and philosophy, the other decidedly postmodern in its stargazing at "constellations" of the self. It will no doubt strike some as reactionary to suggest that it is in Newman's counsel that the restless postmodern soul will the more likely find the calming oil upon the waters it so poignantly seeks.

The Rational Animal

THE CULTURE WE DESERVE. By JACQUES BARZUN. *University Press of New England. 185 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by **M. D. Aeschliman**

"I HAVE GOT MATERIALS toward a treatise," Jonathan Swift wrote to Alexander Pope in September 1725, "proving the falsity of that definition of *animal rationale*, and to show it would be only *rationis capax*." The "treatise," published a year later, was *Gulliver's Travels*, and if any book ever showed that man was not by nature a rational animal, but only *capable* of reason—that he or she only becomes rational through will, effort, and discipline—it is this one. Both book and writer are congenial to Jacques Barzun, who has in fact written an introduction to an edition of *Gulliver* and often quotes Swift. For almost sixty years (his first book was published in 1932), Barzun has steadily and eloquently encouraged sweet reason, trying to aid in the conversion of readers and students from the raw material of *rationis capax* to the finished person who would be a rational animal in the sense of the phrase that Swift intended.

To this end, like Swift and Matthew Arnold before him, Barzun has felt it necessary to be an iconoclast, but not at all in the way that our anarchic culture typically applauds. For in his attempt to defend a basically Aristotelian or classical rationality, Barzun has repeatedly attacked the two greatest sacred cows of modern culture, aestheticism and scientism. An admirer of Chesterton, he often seems to be making that witty sage's point that the difficulty that ensues when people cease to believe in God is not that they then believe in nothing, but that they believe in anything. Thus, in the 1981 Preface to his 1941 classic *Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Critique of a Heritage*, he writes that "the religious cult of art still dominates the modern spirit," and elsewhere he describes the other target of that book as "the tradition of scientism." Now it is not uncommon to see attacks on one or the other of these modern idolatries, but it is a very brave or foolhardy person who will take on both of them.

AND FAR FROM HIS BEING a fool, if there is a more learned or civilized rationalist who has written over the last fifty years, it would be difficult to imagine who he might be. Yet Barzun's "rationalism" is never reductive or antireligious; like Swift and Arnold, and like his more modern models William James and A. N. Whitehead, there is a lot of piety in Barzun, and a judicious openness to the varieties of reli-

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gious experience. A good example is found in his generous estimate of the Salvation Army, of

> what General Booth's movement had done for the uneducated, pauperized, and drink-sodden masses which social Darwinism had complacently allowed to find their place under the heels of fitter men. Then it was seen that neither the fatalism of biological evolution nor the fatalism of "scientific" socialism could withstand a vigorous assault by people who believed in the power of the human will and had the wits to combine religion, social work, army discipline, and rousing tunes.

Like Darwin's old teacher and later critic Adam Sedgwick, whom he quotes with approval, Barzun has always defended the "moral and metaphysical part of man" against scientistic reductionists for whom "objectivity" and "objectness" are indistinguishable. But he is no kinder to the deification of art. In light of the Mapplethorpe affair and the subsequent outraged demands of artists for *carte blanche* public tax subsidy without "censorship," no book provides a better antidote to the antinomian nihilism of the modern artist than Barzun's 1973 Mellon Lectures at the National Gallery, *The Use and Abuse of Art*. In *The Culture We Deserve*, the essays "The Insoluble Problem: Supporting Art" and "A Surfeit of Fine Art" are worthy successors to the Mellon Lectures.

YET NO ONE COULD call Barzun a Philistine or Know Nothing. He is, in fact, an urbane and greatly accomplished mandarin. Like Lionel Trilling, his close friend and colleague at Columbia, Barzun is concerned for the health and well-being of our culture. He has had the courage to attack extravagant claims made for both science and art while at the same time serving for several years as distinguished provost of a major "arts and sciences" university.

His concern for the *res publica* of our culture and our country shows that for all his urbanity, the French immigrant Barzun is actually an American patriot. For Barzun would have us value not only the classical sources of Western Civilization, but also our American contribution to and extension of it. This deep but not uncritical love of our country and culture at their best is apparent in Barzun's 1959 book *God's Country and Mine* (subtitled "A Declaration of Love Spiced with a Few Harsh Words"), his lovely essay on "Lincoln as Writer," his efforts on behalf of John Jay Chapman, his loyalty and service to his own university, his services to the Council on Basic Education, and his 1983 book on William James. In the course of the present book, Barzun directs our attention to a number of neglected great Americans, including George Perkins Marsh (1801-1882), a man comparable to Jefferson in the range of his interests and accomplishments.

Yet the same Barzun has written a standard book on Hector Berlioz; has translated Diderot, Beaumarchais, Musset, and Flaubert; is the author of a rhetoric, a standard book on scholarly research, and volumes of literary and music criticism. His essays in the most recent *Encyclopedia Britannica* cover, among other topics, Poe, "European Culture Since 1800," and "The Point and Pleasure of Reading History." In all these efforts one encounters the same eloquent, nonreductive, rational humanist at work, extending and applying as much as he can the rich resources of a great civilization.

In the essays of *The Culture We Deserve*, as in Barzun's other works, vast learning is lightly but eloquently deployed in defense of a normative understanding of human freedom and rationality, of the soul and of the mind. If Barzun is depressed at the continuing potency and prominence of both "the antinomian passion which is the deepest drive of the age" and of

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transgressive scientism, he nevertheless takes them on unremittingly with the tools of reason and rhetoric that he has honed so well. We have no better specimen in our time of that rare creature, the rational animal.

BRIEFLY NOTED

EDMUND BURKE: APPRAISALS AND APPLICATIONS. Edited by DANIEL RITCHIE. *Transaction Books. 291 pp. $29.95.*

An excellent collection of essays on a political philosopher of timeless value and enduring interest. Burke, the prototype and progenitor of modern conservatism, is considered from various standpoints: literary style, historical context, political theory, and contemporary relevance. General overview-introductory essays are provided by Robert Nisbet, Gerald W. Chapman, and Alexander Bickel. There are contemporary and nineteenth-century commentaries by Coleridge, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Macaulay, Bagehot, and Arnold (among others). Other contributors include Russell Kirk, Harvey Mansfield, Raymond Williams, Conor Cruise O'Brien, John MacCunn, Irving Babbitt, Peter J. Stanlis, and Francis Canavan. The quality and diversity of these essays make the volume a welcome addition to the literature on Edmund Burke.

SIDNEY HOOK: A CHECKLIST OF WRITINGS. Compiled by BARBARA LEVINE. *Southern Illinois University Press. 151 pp. $14.95.*

A comprehensive bibliography of books, articles, reviews, and published letters by Sidney Hook (1902-1989), the philosopher, teacher, and political gadfly. Though an atheistic humanist, Hook was revered by many religionists and conservatives for his vigorous defense of Western freedom and his devotion to the use of "intelligence" in dealing with social problems. This volume—containing well over a thousand entries on almost every imaginable issue of ethics, metaphysics, politics, freedom, and education—gives some idea of the range of Hook's mind, to say nothing of his energy. It was compiled under the supervision of Barbara Levine of the Center for Dewey Studies at Southern Illinois University. Hook devotees will be extremely grateful for the end product, which includes a complete listing of all reviews of Hook's books and replies to his articles, letters, etc. One complaint: chapter titles are not given under book listings, and in Hook's books, often collections of essays, these would be an additional aid. Otherwise, the indexes and cross-referencing are helpful and well done.

MEMOIRS IN EXILE: CONFESSIONAL HOPE AND INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT. By JOHN H. TIETJEN. *Fortress. 359 pp. $19.95.*

At the time, it was considered an enormously important story in the worlds of religion. The story is not yet over. Observers noted that it was the first instance of a major religious body being taken over by a conservative faction. What happened in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), it is commonly said, inspired the current conservative insurgency in the Southern Baptist Convention. John Tietjen was in 1969 appointed president of Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, the premier theological institution of the LCMS. Within months, Jacob Preus was elected president of the LCMS on a platform that promised to rid Concordia of liberal influences. *Memoirs in Exile* is Tietjen's detailed account of the perhaps inevitable battle that followed. The "exile" in the title refers to the 1974 exodus of almost the entire Concordia faculty in order to form a new theological school later called Seminex. Tietjen's account is very detailed and, perhaps not surprisingly, very partisan. He viewed the movement he led as a "confessing church" and a "revelatory-redemptive act of God." The rhetoric on both sides was, to say the least, heavy duty. Religious warfare tends toward most particular nastiness, for it is believed that nothing less is at stake than the truth upon which eternal salvation turns. What in fact was at stake in the wars of Missouri was the use of historical-critical methodology in scriptural study. Twenty years later, biblical scholarship is considerably more skeptical about the methodology for the sake of which the LCMS was divided. The exiled Concordia faculty became the catalyst for the formation of the small Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, which, in turn, was the catalyst for the merger of Lutheran jurisdictions that brought into being the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The LCMS, having purged its "liberal" leadership, turned in upon itself and shows signs of becoming a less distinctly Lutheran denomination in the general world of evangelicalism. The story of Lutheranism in America is by no means over. *Memoirs in Exile* is an exceedingly valuable documentation of one brutally rough chapter in that story.

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Richard John Neuhaus

The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Notes on the Culture Wars

Almost nobody wants to be called a prude and reactionary, a bluenose puritan and spoilsport. It would not be accurate to say that nobody wants to be perceived that way. Some, when they have been called reactionary once too often, embrace the epithet and exult in it. When he launched *National Review* thirty-five years ago, William F. Buckley wrote that its purpose was to stand athwart history and yell Stop. As it turned out, *National Review* did not stop history or even slow it down. It has had a powerful influence on changing directions that our several establishments had declared to be inexorable. Nonetheless, most people do not share Mr. Buckley's relish for a fight. They prefer to identify themselves as "moderates" safely situated between "the extremes." Just as they would not be viewed as prudes or reactionaries, they definitely do not think of themselves as libertines or revolutionaries. The culture wars have everything to do with defining the extremes.

There is little doubt that recent decades have witnessed a distinctly conservative shift on many political and economic questions. Socialist bromides and the notion that human problems can be resolved by government programs are ideas that have been, at least for a time, discredited. Support for market incentives and the empowerment of people to control their own lives is no longer thought to be reactionary. On the contrary, it is generally recognized that those two components are at the heart of truly progressive thinking about society. To be sure, such progressive thinking is today often called conservative, but that only means that conservatism has become "the smart party," while its opponents seem to be mired in the failed programs and tired slogans of the past. Not for nothing has liberalism become a term of opprobrium. One may have some sympathy for those who insist that their version of "authentic liberalism" has not been tried yet, but their complaint is inescapably touched by a tone of desperation.

The political and the economic are important, and those who call themselves conservative can take considerable satisfaction from the trends of the last three decades. Of course their cause was mightily boosted by the Revolution of 1989 in Eastern and Central Europe, a revolution that exploded socialist utopianisms quite beyond the force of all the arguments, exposés, and polemics fired since 1917. Beyond the political and economic, however, is that comprehensive and often vaguely understood sphere that we call the cultural. Culture is conventionally discussed in the puffball terminology of "values." More substantially, it has to do with shared convictions about what is right and what is wrong, what is noble and what is base, what is decent and what is obscene. Compared with politics and economics, culture is thought to be the "soft" dimension of public life. Quite the opposite is the case, however. Politicians appear to be engaged in gaseous abstractions and economists in the reading of entrails compared with the immediacy and consequentiality of questions cultural.

Culture is the way we live, and the way we live in argument with the way we think we ought to live. It has to do with what we eat, wear, watch, admire, and abhor. It has to do with dating, and marriage, and raising children, and trying to get a grasp on what it means to live a good life before our lives are over. These, as any sensible person knows, are the hard questions. A sensible person is here defined as one who immediately and without further explanation recognizes the truth of Dr. Johnson's observation, "How small, of all that human hearts endure, That part which laws or kings can cause or cure."

For sensible people, whether the Fed raises the interest rate or there is a Democratic majority in the Senate pales in importance by comparison with whether Junior is on drugs or his father is seeing that other woman. This testifies to more than the truism that the personal is more important to most of us than the general. (Although many people have been convinced, apparently, that what is in the morning headlines somehow matters more than how they are

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living their own lives.) The point here is that the general reality called the cultural has a greater impact, for better and for worse, than the general realities called politics and economics. Admittedly, we are speaking in general. If the politicians stumble into world war or the economy nosedives into deepest recession, the impact upon the personal can be impressive indeed. Barring those extremities, however, how we live our lives and how we think we ought to live our lives—i.e., the cultural—is of premier importance.

Evidence of a Conservative Shift

Now a case can be made that also in the realm of the cultural there has been a conservative shift over the last three decades. The contrast with the 1960s is instructive and not altogether unencouraging. Most of the countercultural liberationisms of that time are now viewed as silly and destructive by all but the silly and destructive tenured professors who never tire of retelling the bliss it was to be alive and young in the Age of Aquarius. Consider the drug culture. Then the term was associated with the adventuresome and the chic. Now it denotes, almost without exception, the desperation of wasted lives in the urban underclass. The swingers, the singles bars, the open marriages—all are now consigned to a sordid past. For the most part.

In case after case, the counterculture has been effectively countered. Or so it would seem. Marriage is back, and it is by no means unfashionable to say a good word for fidelity. Women who were once persuaded that they could "have it all" are recognizing that choices must be made, and a growing number make no apology for choosing home and children. Making it in the male world increasingly seems less an achievement than a confinement. To be sure, at the margins the feminist battles are still pressed. There was a great fuss and flurry about the woman reporter demanding her right to hang out in the football locker room. "A woman's place is any place," the *New York Times* sententiously opined. More sensible people laughed and allowed as how it was best to leave the boys to their games.

There are other positive indications. Having rediscovered the merits of marriage, an increasing number of very bright young people have hit upon the idea that marriage and children seem to go nicely together. We will not be surprised if very soon the statistics indicate that the "birth dearth" has bottomed out. In all our years in New York, we have never seen so many prams on the street, or so many women looking quite pleased about being expectant. (That is anecdotal information, admittedly, but then real life is mainly anecdotal.) For all the sadness attending the black underclass in our cities, the awareness of the phenomenon seems to have made it the conventional wisdom again that, without marriage, stable families, and regular work, life is likely to turn into an awful mess. That that wisdom was for a time unconventional is an indication of how determined some were to blind themselves to the obvious.

In addition, it seems that we are on the edge of being able to talk again in public about public decency. Oceans of ink have been spent on the controversy over the National Endowment for the Arts and its funding of what most sensible people think to be pornography, albeit sometimes very "artistic" pornography. While the Congress will extend NEA for a time, the champions of its old ways can take little comfort from the legal restraints placed upon its libertine propensities. The cant and clamor about censorship and First Amendment rights notwithstanding, it has penetrated even most political minds that there is something not a little outrageous about expecting taxpayers to put up the money for "art" that is expressly intended to outrage them. If people insist upon taking pictures of men peeing into one another's mouths, they should do it on their own dime, and preferably behind closed doors. Most Americans would rather not know about it. They are reluctant to send in the cops, but neither do they want to pay for activities that, try as they might, strike them as perverse. It is one of the happy failures of our educational system that it has not succeeded in persuading normal people that there is nothing abnormal.

And so it would seem that, on several cultural fronts, we are witnessing a veritable renascence of common sense. In addition to the evidences above, there is much discussion of how those who were dismissively called yuppies are now returning, or turning for the first time, to religion. On the most fevered of moral issues in public, namely abortion, there is an expanding consensus that the question is how and when the unborn should be protected by law, rather than whether they should be protected at all. Put it all together, and one can make an impressive case that there is underway a popular, and possibly long-term, shift toward cultural conservatism, or, as some might prefer, toward the perennial wisdom about how we ought to live together once the subordinate questions of politics and economics have been settled.

"Progressive" Enclaves

Just when you thought it was safe to go out again, enter developments to the contrary. Perhaps they are not so much to the contrary as they are simply complicating developments. The liberationisms of the sixties are thriving, and in fact becoming more aggressive, in some sectors of society. Notably in the universities, more "progressive" church circles, and the communications media. These, as scholars have

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explained in great detail, are the chief dens of "knowledge class" iniquity. These are the kingdoms of the experts, the domains of people who are paid to know. And one thing they know for certain is that any opinion that is popular is almost sure to be wrong. Their calling is to take the unpopular side, and they boldly do so, especially when taking any other side is, within their little worlds, dangerously unpopular. That is why intellectuals and would-be intellectuals are described as a herd of independent minds.

For a while, and this was not without its embarrassments, it seemed that the knowledge class had prevailed. As with prophets of whom all speak well, there is an awkwardness when elitists are popularly acclaimed. But the rewards made up for the awkwardness, and we were for a decade and more presented with the declared triumph of "the greening of America," the arrival of "Consciousness III," and other cultural transformations of the bad, uptight (remember uptight?), oppressive way that—or so it was said—America used to be. The jargon of cultural revolution that now seems so quaint was very much preoccupied with sex. The protagonists of the counterculture had sex on the mind, which, as Chesterton observed, is a very unsatisfactory place to have it. They still do have sex on the mind.

The afterglow of the cultural revolution that failed is, as noted earlier, burning brightly in the little worlds of liberal religion. Those worlds are becoming littler year by year, but those in charge of them claim not to be fazed. This, they say, has always been the fate of prophets who keep the faith. A different dynamic is at work in the communications and entertainment media. They are, after all, commercial enterprises. ABC and CBS must remain at least within hailing distance of the popular mood if they are to sell the advertising that pays the bloated salaries of its so very progressive stars. The prospect of boycotts and sponsor cancellations has a wonderful way of concentrating the mind. The universities, the third institutional refuge of radicalisms past, are not similarly inhibited. Buffered by endowments, tax funds, an inflexible tenure system, and the aura of academic freedom, they are free to impose the party line of yesteryear's liberations until the retirement of the last professor who lives his life in nostalgic remembrance of being briefly alive at Woodstock. What were once cultural eruptions are now ossified in quotas, entitlements, and rules against free speech that violates politically correct opinion. Pondering the place of universities in our culture, Chester Finn aptly describes them as islands of repression in a sea of freedom.

Yet Another Force

In addition to these three institutional homes for the refugees from radicalisms past—the churches, the media, the universities—there is another force that seems to be increasingly aggressive. Moving beyond the three enclaves of countercultural shelter, homosexual activism is a growing factor in our politics, especially in urban politics. In San Francisco and New York, of course, but not only there. In the view of many, the cause of "gay rights" is very much on the ascendancy. It is joined by radical feminism but, within the movement itself, it is recognized (and much lamented by the feminists) that the women are something of an appendage. Lest there be any misunderstanding, we are speaking of *radical* feminism; that is to say, women who make no secret of the fact that they do not like men, that they view the institution of marriage as a kind of incarceration, and that they consider heterosexual intercourse to be tantamount to rape. Such radical feminists are, as often as not, the admittedly lesbian adjunct to gay activism.

Movements for women's rights, taking on various hues of radicality, are nothing new. They have been coming and going for at least two centuries. Women's movements come on as a fundamental challenge to the gender-related institutions and habits of the ages, and then recede while consoling themselves that they have attained a greater measure of equality. Homosexual activism is something new. What started twenty years ago is unprecedented in our cultural history. The homosexual movement is inherently and of necessity fundamental in its challenge. Unlike feminism, it cannot settle for adjustments in the relationships between women and men within the institution of the family.

The organized homosexual cause has no choice but to be at war with those relationships and with that institution. In the past, homosexuals, if they were known as such, hoped to be viewed with tolerance as a relatively harmless exception or even deviation from the norm. Today, to "come out of the closet" is to declare war on the norm. And those who refuse to come out on their own are increasingly being publicly exposed (it is called "outing") by activists who declare war on their behalf. The challenge is unquestionably fundamental. It is a challenge both to the majority culture and to the previously discreet subculture of the "gay world," the existence of which cosmopolitans have always taken for granted.

By the early seventies, homosexuality had hitched a ride with the civil rights cause. Now everybody was a victim, everybody claimed to be the "nigger" of societal oppression. Remarkably enough, the civil rights leadership welcomed gay activists as allies, thus endorsing the inevitable blurring of the specificity of race-based grievances. The gay activists no longer demanded tolerance or a tacit acknowledgment of their "lifestyle" in a pluralistic society. Everything must now be made explicit. Past habits of homosexual discretion were now condemned as betrayal. The wisdom of La

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Rouchefoucauld, that hypocrisy is the homage that vice pays to virtue, was repudiated. The cry went up, No more hypocrisy! Hypocrisy would be ended not simply by vice refusing to pay homage but by vice demanding to be accepted as virtue.

In the late seventies the push was on for "gay rights bills" around the country. Many communities resisted. In New York the resistance was led by the Roman Catholic archdiocese and Orthodox Jews, and a gay rights bill was not passed until 1986. Such bills focused on prohibiting discrimination in housing and employment and most Americans, being Americans, thought that fair enough. The late Paul Ramsey of Princeton was among the few in mainstream Protestantism who argued publicly that such gay rights bills were a ruse. They were not aimed, he contended, at remedying an injustice but at redefining justice. Justice, according to the proponents of such bills, requires that the society be prevented from publicly indicating its preference that people deal with their sexuality in a manner supportive of family and children. When accused of being anti-family, the gay activists and their allies protested vigorously, while at the same time engaging in an intensive campaign to "redefine" family out of existence. That campaign reached its apogee in the ill-fated White House Conference on Families under the auspices of Jimmy Carter.

The Critical Wedge

That Paul Ramsey and other critics were right is now evident to all who have eyes to see. Far from being the pathetic victims of discrimination, homosexuals in our major cities are among the most affluent and influential of citizens. This should come as no surprise. Well-educated professionals with no dependents have an extraordinary advantage in discretionary time and income. The reality has not been lost on politicians and businessmen in our urban centers. Were homosexuals the victims of discrimination, one would have expected an upsurge of housing and job complaints after the passage of gay rights bills. In fact, that has not happened. The gay rights bills were important for a quite different reason. They were a critically important wedge, opening the way to additional steps in relativizing the social and moral status of heterosexuality and the family.

The additional steps followed quickly. Some cities and university-dominated small towns have arranged for marriage-like registrations of homosexual partnerships. New York State has decreed that such partners are entitled to inherit rights to rent-controlled apartments. Employers are being successfully sued for death benefits coming to the "spouse" in a homosexual relationship. Mayor David Dinkins of New York boasts of the number of lesbians he has appointed to family courts. Dinkins has articulated the grand vision. Addressing the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination last spring, he noted that, "It's the media that shapes the attitudes that prevail in our culture. . . . Where are the gay characters on TV sitcoms? Why are there not more lesbians on soap operas? When will there be an out-of-the-closet commentator or anchor on national television or on the local news?"

Giving the lie to the notion that homosexuals are denied access to housing or employment, Dinkins goes on: "Gays and lesbians serve in government, as teachers, as police officers, as corporate executives, and they ought to stand prominently and proudly in the media spotlight as well. Only then will the fact of homosexuality become an accepted part of the reality of America, a real land of liberty in which you ought to be able to hold hands without fear of assault, or kiss your lover goodbye without worrying about who is watching." What must become "an accepted part of the reality of America" is that discretion is no longer required in departing from the assumed normality of male-female relationships. In that ideal world, presumably, there would be no Greenwich Village, for the dominant "lifestyle" of the Village would be the at least equally accepted lifestyle everywhere. Probably closer to the reality, the goal is to somehow force the working class boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn to publicly approve of Greenwich Village.

That goal is not easy to achieve. Perhaps because they recognize that, gay activists have become ever more desperately aggressive. Act-Up, among the most strident organizations, has regularly disrupted services at St. Patrick's Cathedral, in one notorious instance breaking up a mass and desecrating the consecrated elements. Queer Nation is the name of a militant group that aims to force the majority to accept homosexuality by reverse epithet, much as some militant blacks call themselves "bad niggers." A few years ago it was declared a great victory when the city went along with reverse discrimination, opening a high school just for more aggressively homosexual students.

Of course readers may think, with some justice, that New York has always been more than a little crazy. With respect to homosexuality and other "alternative lifestyles," New York and San Francisco constitute a two-ring circus that the rest of the nation watches more with amusement than alarm. True, New York remains, for better and definitely for worse, the cultural and media center of the nation, indeed of the world. Its influence on Duluth and Dubuque cannot be dismissed lightly. That said, however, homosexual activism here may have gone as far as it can go. In this connection, New York may be more the backwater than the avant garde. Most cities cannot muster the "critical mass" of homosexualism that makes this circus possible. New York may well reduce the homosexual influence in Duluth and

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Dubuque by serving as a magnet that draws gays who want to act up in the big time. And political clout, as represented by David Dinkins, could be shakier than it appears. His administration is in a hopeless shambles and it seems likely that he is a one-term mayor. So maybe this most publicized assault on the family by homosexuals and radical feminists should be no great cause for concern within the national context of a culture sobering up after an extended liberationist binge.

Paying the Price

Nonetheless, serious damage is being done. As usual, the price is being paid by those least able to pay it. In New York City, that means the black and Hispanic children caught in the financially bloated and educationally decrepit public school system. The school bureaucracy, cheered on by gay activists, has announced its intention to distribute free condoms in the high schools, and maybe in the junior highs. This is advertised as a campaign to reduce the incidence of AIDS by encouraging "safe sex." The message could not be clearer. It is that teenagers among the poor are incorrigibly rutting animals incapable of taking charge of their lives. The message is also that the schools must be "value free" with respect to sexuality. There must be no hint of censure, nor the slightest suggestion that one way is better than another. Fornication, adultery, and, of course, homosexuality are but different ways of seeking the sexual satisfaction to which we are all entitled. Each has its own way of "bonding," and results in its own kind of "family." And, needless to say, we "value" family very highly indeed.

These programs are sold under the label of public health. This despite the fact that study after study over the last fifteen years has shown that value-free sex education, combined with access to contraceptives, results in an increase rather than a decrease of adolescent sexual activity, venereal disease, and teenage pregnancy. Nonetheless, educational authorities keep a straight face while declaring, among other things, that the way to reduce AIDS is to teach children that homosexuality is an equally "viable" form of sexual expression. Critics say that homosexual activists press for the promotion of homosexuality in the schools in order to bend young people of an impressionable age toward their "lifestyle." We might hesitate to judge motives, but one reality is beyond reasonable doubt. The same programs and propaganda would not be tolerated in the schools of the middle class and affluent. The children of the underclass are a captive audience, in the fullest sense of "captive."

They have no choice. They have to go to the schools that everybody else has abandoned. They are the ones who are left. They are the guinea pigs of the cultural revolutionaries who have been rejected by the larger culture. In communities of the black underclass, where over the last quarter century the institution of the family has for all practical purposes disappeared, children are taught about the oppressive nature of the "nuclear family" that they have never known. Their teachers and textbooks sneer at the "Ozzie and Harriet" families that will, just as the teachers and textbooks say, remain for these children always a "myth." It is an unspeakably cruel thing to do to little children.

Such, then, are notes on the culture wars. In the economic and political spheres, there are heartening signs of something like a turn toward sanity. Similar signs are evident in the culture. Sinecured silliness holds broad sway in the mainstream churches, in the universities, and in the media. What used to be the mainstream churches are drying up; the media, however reluctantly and erratically, adjust to their markets; and tenured professors will one day die, making room for a generation that is not prepared to spend its years living in the afterglow of youthful radicalisms. There is reason to be hopeful about the future. Except for the captive children of the underclass. They will continue to be the victims of the cultural revolutionaries from whom the larger society has turned away in disgust.

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ONE MORNING'S ORTHODOXIES

It's a rule of thumb you can count on. The most entrenched orthodoxies are the ones that are least in need of articulation. They are the taken-for-granted assumptions, they float in the ideational air that we breathe. It has been observed that, if you wanted an intelligent opinion on water, the last parties you would go to would be the fish who swim in it. They have never had occasion to think about water—until they are rudely deprived of it. That is why, at our house, we begin the day with the office of Morning Prayer before being reimmersed for another day in the world according to the *New York Times*. Morning Prayer posits a counter-orthodoxy that alerts one to the orthodoxies in which he might otherwise thoughtlessly swim.

Almost any day of *Times*-reading will serve to illustrate the point. Today, for example. We choose three orthodoxies more or less at random. Here is a story about those independent conservative (ugh) newspapers that are springing up on college campuses around the country. The determined investigative reporter exposes the sinister finding that, wouldn't you know it, the papers are being supported by conservatives. We are told that the

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official student papers receive no such outside funding. We are not told that the papers of Politically Correct Opinion (PCO) live off hundreds of thousands of dollars taken, involuntarily, from student fees at state and private schools. The independent papers are, by their very existence, violating the established way of doing things. Even worse, they push opinion outrageously non-subservient to what we are all supposed to take for granted. For instance, the *Campus Review* at the University of Iowa has preposterously editorialized that there is a connection between AIDS and homosexual coupling. This in a time when enlightened opinion has established that AIDS, in a manner ever so complex, is the fault of homophobic bigots who disapprove of homosexual coupling.

For another example, there are two stories this morning about the "crisis" of priestly celibacy in the Catholic Church. Some mornings there is only one. Deemed worthy of sixteen column inches this morning is a report of a rumor that a Vatican official wrote an American bishop inquiring why he had met with a group of priests who had married and now want to be restored to their ministries. The reporter admits he has not seen the letter, but he talked to some unnamed informants who said they had. Here we have two orthodoxies offended. The first is that any inquiry by the Vatican into what is going on in the American Catholic Church—as distinct from the Roman Catholic Church—is deeply menacing. (Alternatively, the *Times* complains that Rome does not make an effort to understand Catholicism in this country.) The second orthodoxy offended is that regular genital exercise is essential to healthy living. In this view, chastity is deprivation, celibacy is perversion, and virginity is simply risible.

But among this morning's passel of orthodoxies, the prize must go to another story. It seems that *Scientific American* denied a job to the gifted science writer, Forrest M. Mims III. Mr. Mims had been doing a column for the magazine, titled "Amateur Scientist." But then his awful secret was discovered. According to Armand Schwab, who was managing editor when the decision was made, Mr. Mims "was a nonbeliever in evolution." Mims, it turns out, is one of those Christians who believes the world was created. Apparently he goes so far as to think the creation involved a Creator. Ever vigilant against extremisms, editor Jonathan Piel determined that hiring Mims would compromise the magazine's integrity. The *Times* reports: "Mr. Piel denied in a recent telephone interview that Mr. Mims had been the victim of religious discrimination. '*Scientific American* has never discriminated against anyone on the basis of their religious beliefs and it never will,' he said. He declined to elaborate or answer other questions."

To the credit of our culture's chief purveyor of parochial orthodoxies, the *Times* editor in charge of the story apparently thought this a bit much, as indicated by the headline: "Hire a Creationist? A Nonbeliever in Darwin? Not at a Proud Science Journal." On second thought, maybe the story was considered a bit much because it challenged another orthodoxy, one more deeply entrenched even than evolutionary theory. "The case of Mr. Mims," we are told, "raises the difficult questions of whether and when a potential employer can take a job candidate's private beliefs into account." The orthodoxy asserted here, of course, is that religion is an entirely private matter that must not be permitted to impinge upon the real world where important things like jobs are at stake.

Mr. Mims, one gathers, goes along with that, for he is "adamant in asserting that he has never allowed his religious beliefs to influence his scientific writing." Maybe he should. In any event, Mims is still hoping that *Scientific American* might someday change its mind. "I even told them I could be their token Christian, but they didn't smile at that." Also unsmiling were the scientific experts consulted by the *Times*. Said a Dr. Olson of the University of California: "If it were known that Mims was a creationist, it would give quite a boost to those pushing creation science, which I take to be an oxymoron. I would be against having such a person writing a column because at the base this philosophy could enter everything one does in science."

A biologist at the University of Texas observed: "I certainly understand *Scientific American*'s point of view. It's difficult for biologists when *people who have studied science* come forward with this view. It doesn't make it true, but it does attract attention" (emphasis added). Apparently there is no problem when the idea of creation is espoused by Bible-thumping ignoramuses. But when somebody who has been initiated into the sacred mysteries of science takes that view, things have clearly gotten out of hand. Another professor of biology notes that Mim is a physicist and says "a surprising number" of physicists believe in creation. "The physical sciences do not require a working knowledge of evolution," he explained, "which the life sciences, by any reasonable account, do." Readers of this journal, recalling Philip Johnson's splendid "Evolution as Dogma" (October 1990), will not be surprised by the nervousness of the cognition cops patrolling the borders of *Scientific American*.

These, then, are but three of the more notable orthodoxies propounded in today's edition of our most respectable local newspaper. That is why it is so important to do Morning Prayer before reading the *Times*, so that you are aware of the ideational waters in which this unhappy world swims. After a full day of immersion, it is a very good idea to clear mind and soul with Evening Prayer as well.

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Jews and Liberalism

Here is an important study by sociologist Steven M. Cohen, done for the American Jewish Committee. *The Dimensions of American Jewish Liberalism* examines why Jews tend to be ever so much more liberal on social and political questions than do other Americans. Cohen looks at the survey research data on the standard issues that are usually taken to distinguish right from left: affirmative action, social welfare programs, taxing and spending, church and state, abortion, gay rights, pornography, capital punishment, and views of the news media. On issue after issue, Jews are more liberal, often dramatically so, than others.

Not always, however. On capital punishment, for instance: three-quarters of Jews and three-quarters of white gentiles oppose abolishing it. (Fifty percent of blacks favor abolition.) Why do Jews break with the liberal stereotype on this issue? Cohen suggests it may have to do with most Jews living in or near urban areas with high crime rates. "Another clue," he writes, "may lie in the fact that, according to previous surveys, Jews connect social disorder and violence with anti-Semitism. A certain historically informed Jewish consciousness suggests that the breakdown of public order is a harbinger of pogroms. Thus Jews may feel more keenly the need to 'crack down' on murderers by maintaining the death penalty."

But capital punishment is the exception. On abortion, for example, a mere one percent of Jews favor a complete ban. Eighty-seven percent—twice as many as among non-Jews—say that abortion should be "legal as it is now." The disparity between Jews and others is evident also when the question is asked whether one would support an unmarried teenage daughter's decision to procure an abortion. "In other words," Cohen remarks, "Jews may not only be more civil libertarian in public policy, but also more 'libertine' in private morality." On matters of homosexuality and pornography, Jews are similarly more "accepting" than other Americans. (Cohen's research, like many others, shows that, on social and moral issues, black Americans tend to be more conservative than most.)

How, then, does Cohen explain the liberal propensities of American Jews? "Jews are more liberal than other Americans because they had more liberal parents; more of them went to college and more obtained graduate degrees; and fewer are religious." Also important is a pervasive "sense of marginality" in American life. "Moreover, feeling threatened by anti-Semitism and tending to identify their antagonists as clustering more on the right than on the left, many Jews feel impelled to support liberals and Democrats." Although the shift has been underway for more than a quarter century, most Jews seem not to have noticed that anti-Semitism has moved markedly to the left on the political spectrum. Anti-Israeli agitation in liberal church and political circles, sympathy for black groups expressly hostile to Jews, and the anti-Jewish effusions of such as Gore Vidal in *The Nation* are all leftist phenomena. Yet much more public criticism is directed at the allegedly anti-Semitic statements of conservatives such as Pat Buchanan and Joe Sobran, thus reinforcing a Jewish perception that the enemy is on the right. Habits of perception die hard.

Cohen concludes: "Jewish liberalism, then, arises out of social factors that happen to characterize many American Jews. Other Americans with the same education, with the same religiosity (or lack thereof), and with parents of the same political stripe would be almost as liberal as comparable Jews. But Jewish liberalism has a peculiarly Jewish dimension. It is the sense of being a minority, of not quite belonging, that lies at the heart of American Jewish identity."

Charles Silberman (*A Certain People*) and other students of American Judaism argue that there is something almost surreal about Jewish feelings of insecurity. Never, not anywhere, have Jews been so secure as they are in America. Beyond security, the evidence of the stunning success of Jews in America is overwhelming. But human beings are not usually argued into their anxieties, and therefore cannot be argued out of them. Jews constitute roughly 2 percent of the population. That most Jews are inclined to think in terms of "us" and "them" is perhaps inevitable. To the extent that Jews are encouraged to overcome that way of thinking—at least in its more anxiety-ridden forms—there may be a movement toward more centrist positions on social and political issues that touch upon the common good. One thing is clear: The surest way to entrench Jewish thinking in terms of "us" and "them" is for non-Jews to think and talk in terms of "us" and "them." (The Cohen study is available for $5 from the American Jewish Committee, Institute of Human Relations, 165 East 56 St., New York, NY 10022.)

FT

Blind Bloom

Our friend Richard Brookhiser takes Allan Bloom to task at precisely the point where he needs to be taken to task. More than one commentator on Bloom's immensely successful *The Closing of the American Mind* noted his blindness to some aspects of American life and thought that are overwhelmingly obvious to most observers. Religion, for example. Before getting to Brookhiser, we should note in Bloom's defense that he is a student of philosopher Leo Strauss (d. 1973). Now Straussians are a strange

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and wondrous lot. Spend any time with them and it quickly becomes evident that there were two or three or maybe more Leo Strausses—especially on the subject of the connections between Athens and Jerusalem. We have been pleased to know Straussians who learned from the Master that the life of the mind and the life of the spirit are inherently antithetical. Others inform us that he so revered religion that he paid it the tribute of his silence. Yet others knew a Strauss who deemed religion to be a useful lie for keeping the great unwashed in line. And we have run into a Straussian or two who assure us that The Great One was a deeply religious soul who did not live long enough to get his final thinking about the ultimate truths of Jerusalem on record.

However many Strausses there were, there is only one Allan Bloom, and to him Rick Brookhiser attends in reviewing his recent book of essays, *Giants and Dwarfs*. "Bloom's most striking failing is his inattention to religion. The flyover from Aristotle to Machiavelli is typical. The only medieval philosophers Bloom discusses in any detail are Maimonides and the Arab Alfarabi, and he discusses them only as secret believers in the irreconcilability of philosophy and revelation.

"If he scants the Catholic centuries, he ignores Protestantism. This leads to odd misjudgments of America. Religion has been 'totally transformed' here, he writes, under the influence of contract theorists and the society they created. Bloom does not know or does not consider that Jefferson described his 'wall of separation' in a letter to a group of Baptists; or that the dismantling of theocracy in New England a century earlier was as much the result of theological conundrums—how could the authorities tell who was a saint?—as of the need to accommodate non-Puritans. The religions of America created American religious liberty, not the other way around.

"Bloom takes his dim view of religions because, as he says over and over, theology is the only possible rival to philosophy as a guide to truth, and it's obvious which side of that quarrel he comes down on. But if he had approached religions as serious alternatives, he would have had a folder of wiser essays to choose from."

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BLAHOSLAV HRUBY

He died October 22, on the eve of his seventy-ninth birthday. He was, quite simply, a hero. As a young man at Jan Hus Protestant Theological Seminary in Prague, Blaho Hruby witnessed the rise of Nazism and received his vocation to a life of resistance. Ministering to refugees in Paris, he escaped just moments before the Nazi takeover and went to Marseilles where he helped Jews and others flee to safety. In 1945 he returned to his native Czechoslovakia with Patton's Third Army. It was soon evident to Blaho that the terror of Nazism was being succeeded by another of at least equal dimensions.

In Prague he met and married Olga, a student activist who shared his understanding that the world was divided anew between free and unfree. After several of their close friends had been arrested and executed, the Hrubys fled to America where, in 1962 under the auspices of the National Council of Churches, they launched a new publication, *RCDA—Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*. By 1971 it was no longer thought to be in good taste to draw attention to the victims of Communism's ruthless violations of religious and other human rights. The National Council of Churches withdrew its sponsorship of *RCDA*, and the Hrubys, with the help of a few friends, established the independent Research Center for Religion and Human Rights in Closed Societies. Throughout the Cold War, *RCDA* was one of the few reliable sources of information about religious and human rights developments behind the iron curtain.

Numerous dissidents have generously acknowledged their debt to *RCDA* for bringing their plight to the attention of the West. They include Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Alexander Ginzburg, Rev. Georgi Vins, Vladimir Bukovsky, Vaclav Havel, and victims of persecution among Ukrainian and Lithuanian Catholics, Soviet Evangelicals and Jews, Crimean Tatars, and Bulgarian Turks. In July of 1990, Blaho Hruby was able to return to a liberated Czechoslovakia. His contribution was recognized by now-President Vaclav Havel: "You were among the few who paid attention to the oppressed at a time when it was not at all lucrative. For that you deserve most heartfelt thanks."

In times of sickness, sometimes almost alone, with slight financial support, shunned by many as "cold warriors," Blaho and Olga Hruby sought out the persecuted and told their stories to a world and a church that often did not want to hear. When the account of the great terror that was Communism is finally rendered, their work and witness will shine brightly against the dark background of the indifference of most Christians in the West. Olga is determined that the Research Center will continue, helping Christians and Jews in Eastern Europe to work through the ethnic and religious conflicts erupting in the wake of the evil empire's collapse. There is no doubt that Blaho, now commended to the Light that lighted his life, would approve. By his time among us, we have all been ennobled, and heartened in the vocation to resistance.

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While We're At It

■ Humorist Russell Baker, in a column titled "Ethicizationism," notes that in the old days David Susskind's Sunday night show "always had a band of clerics, professors, and columnists trying to sort the right from the wrong in the issue of the week, but it seemed mere amateur's sport." It is different today. "The development of modern ethicism has changed all that. Nowadays when the host summons the panel to the big, big question, and the camera moves in on a cool professional countenance, and you see the word 'ETHICIST' spelled out under his picture, you feel safe and assured." Baker is well aware that "breakthroughs" in medical technology—embryo transplants and all that—have created questions that, we are incessantly instructed, the ancients never gave a thought to. "It is laughable to think of the old Susskind panelists trying to solve such questions," says Baker. "Those amateurs could agonize, and they could sympathize. They could even empathize, but they could not ethicize." As it happens, your editor appeared from time to time on that old Susskind show, so he may be a bit touchy on the subject. Not, mind you, because he has been shoved aside by the ubiquitous new breed called ethicist. He is, in fact, frequently referred to as an ethicist—by others, never by himself. Ethicist is a title easily earned by anyone of credibly furrowed brow who regularly writes, speaks, and is otherwise publicly ponderous about the big, big questions. What Baker is getting at, if we understand him aright, is that "ethicizationism" is an instance of pseudo-professionalism. The rise of ethics as a profession is in tandem with the decline of morality as a practice. Business, medicine, government, and sundry sciences avail themselves of ethicists-for-hire when they want permission to do what used to be morally forbidden. The results, unlike Russell Baker's column, are not funny.

■ Garry Wills' new book is out, *Under God: Religion and American Politics*. This journal will be paying it attention in the review section. Your editor reviewed it early for the *Boston Globe*, and has since followed with interest what other reviewers are making of it. Our judgment was that it is, all in all, a pretty good book. It is refreshing to have a left-of-center author demonstrate so effectively the blindness of cultural elites to the power and pervasiveness of religion in American life. Admittedly, one is disappointed that Wills refuses to step out of the liberal line by drawing appropriate conclusions. For instance, he quite demolishes Mario Cuomo's position on abortion ("Personally opposed, but . . .") while being no more willing than Cuomo to lift a finger in protecting the unborn and other endangered members of the human species. Nonetheless, we thought it a book well worth reading. Not so with the reviewer chosen by the *New York Times Book Review*—Hugh Brogan of Essex University in England. Mr. Brogan writes this: "It is true that the secularization of the American mind is not proceeding rapidly, if at all." But he deplores Wills' failure to deal with those "who have faced up to the universe revealed by science." "Doubt," he counsels us, "can be as strengthening and comforting a condition as faith, and is much more congenial to the modern mind. Mr. Wills does not have to succumb to its assault, but a book on religion that shirks this, the greatest challenge that the churches have to face, is indeed evasive." Note that the reviewer's post-religious sensibility piously appeals to what is "revealed" by science. Note his belief that the thinking of the vast majority of Americans has not caught up with "the modern mind." Mr. Brogan concludes his review with a complaint that Wills spends some time discussing views of when human life begins. "Anyone who apparently cannot see that such a discussion is, in the strictest possible sense of the word, nonsense," writes Brogan, "is either unqualified for his task or up to no good." Note that Mr. Brogan is, in a manner most egregiously exemplified by English dons opining on things American, a supercilious ass.

Sources: David Dinkins quote in *Catholic New York*, October 4, 1990. On orthodoxies, the *New York Times* October 24, 1990. Brookhiser on Bloom in *National Review*, October 15, 1990. Russell Baker in the *New York Times*, October 27, 1990. Hugh Brogan on Garry Wills in the *New York Times Book Review*, October 28, 1990.

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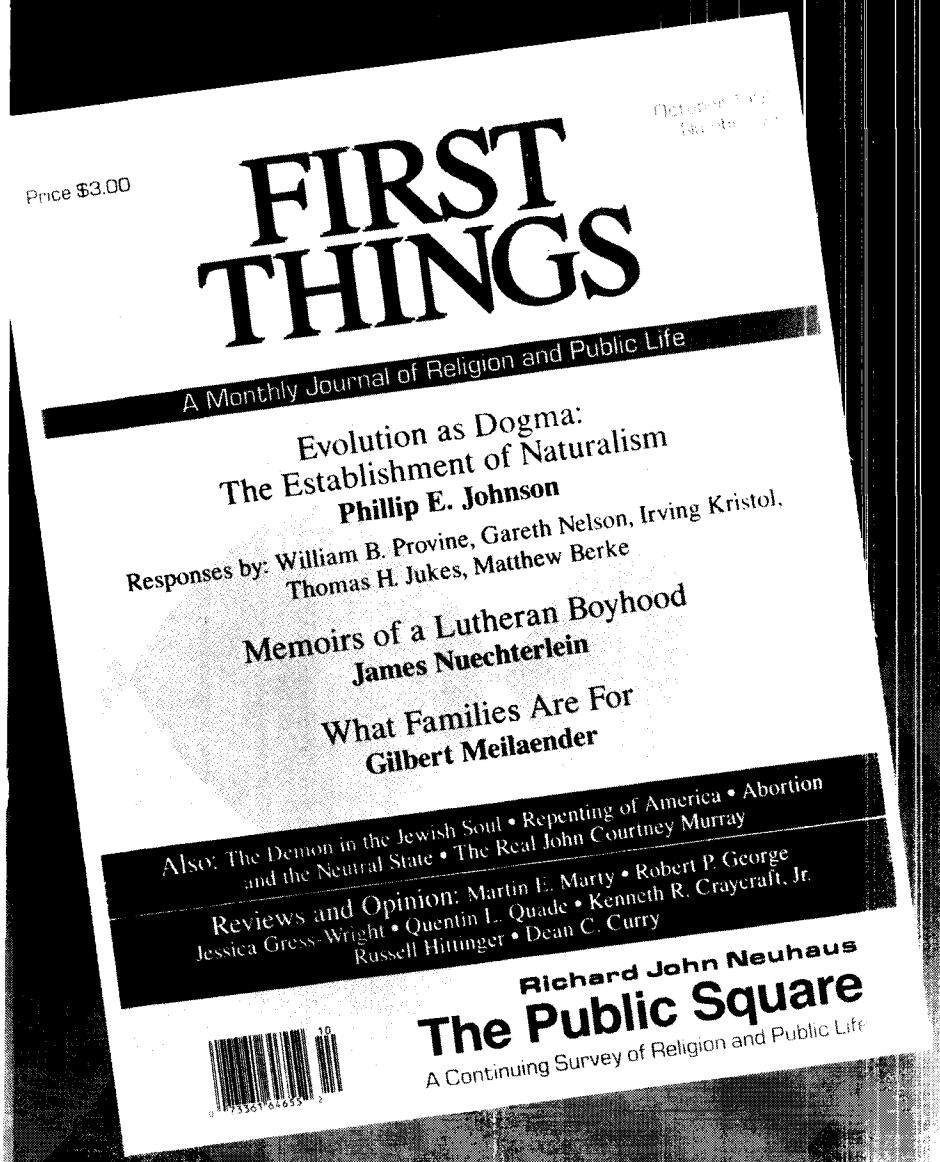
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